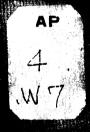
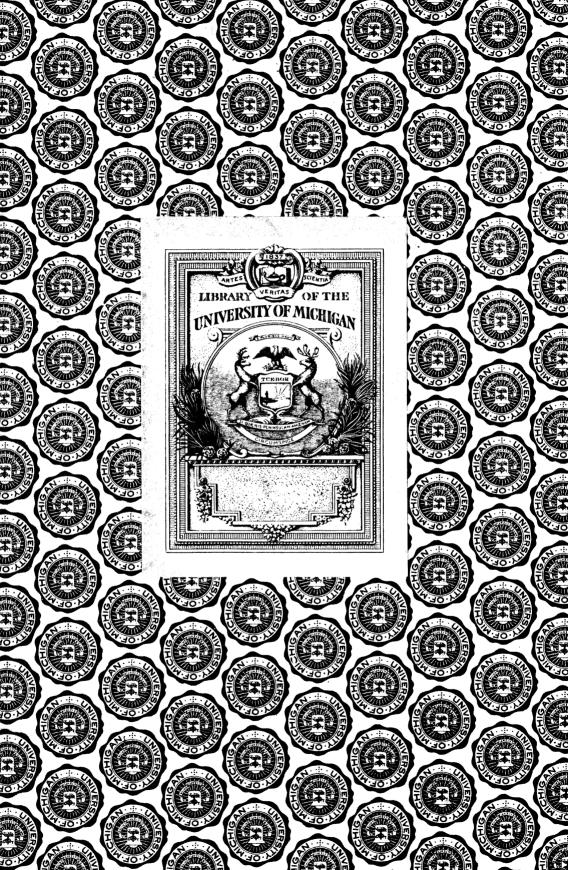


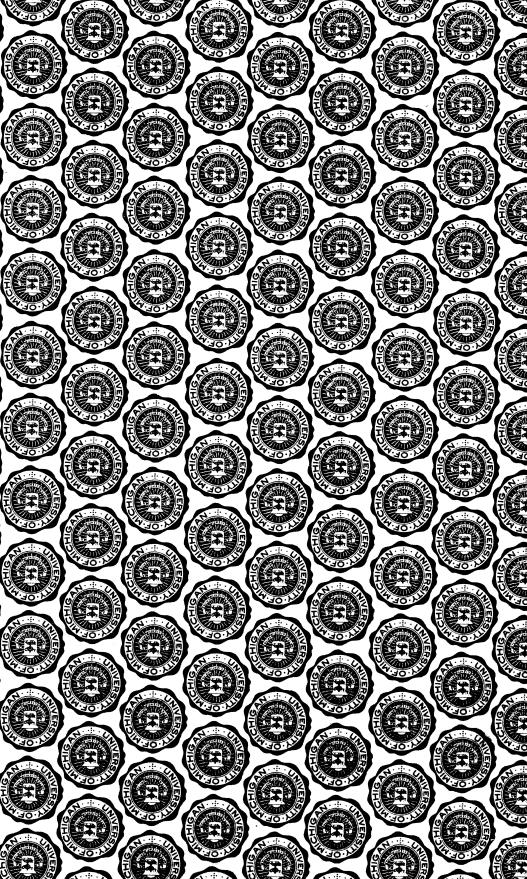
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LXVIII
JUNE TO NOVEMBER, 1928

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED LONDON AND MELBOURNE



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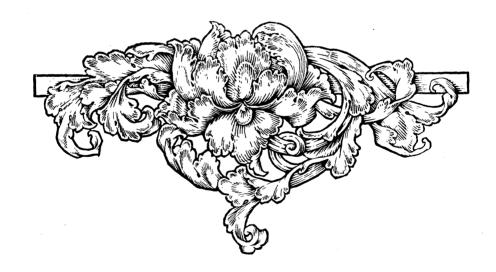
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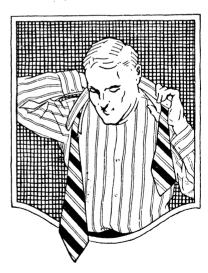
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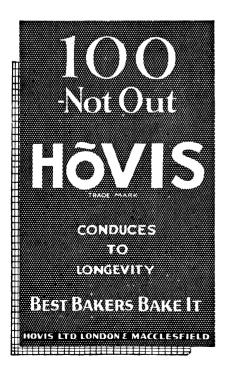
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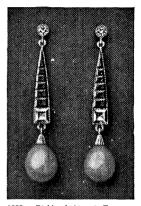
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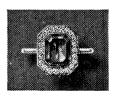
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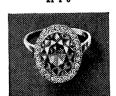
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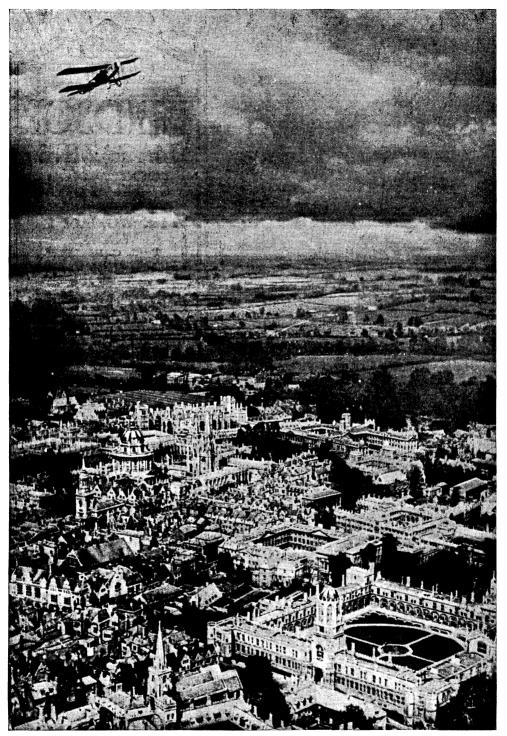
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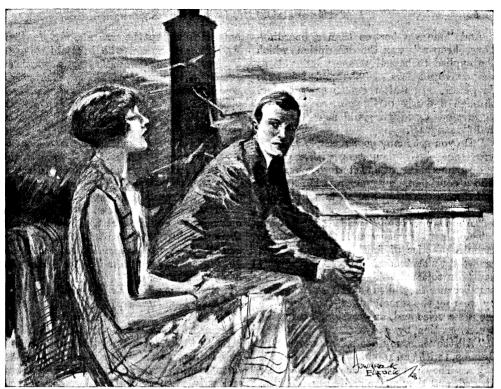
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"Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night . . . She needs not June for beauty's heightening."

Matthew Arnold.



You mustn't say anything till I've told mother,' said Patience at last."

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE THE ADVENTURE OF THE UNDISCERNING LOVER

By STEPHEN McKENNA

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

"NOTWITHSTANDING anything to the contrary contained in my Will I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my real and personal estate to such grandson of mine as shall be the first to marry within twelve calendar months from the date of this Codicil and shall within that period legally adopt the surname of Datchley and shall within six months of his marriage give an Undertaking to reside at Datchley Castle for not less than six calendar months in each year after my death. If there shall be no such grandson then the provisions of my Will shall take effect."

Extract from the codicil to the last will and

testament of John Datchley.

T was the boast of Mrs. Quinlan that visitors to Sea View came as boys and girls, came back as young married couples and continued to come when they had boys and girls of their own.

"More a home than just a boarding-house," was her description of the square stone building at the south end of the East-

cliffe promenade.

And "more a hostess than a boardinghouse keeper" was the description which she applied to herself at short intervals as she convòyed Mrs. Hobbs and her twin daughters, on an afternoon in early spring, through a desert of linoleum-covered passages and aspidistra-gladdened "nooks" and "lounges".

"Do you get many young people here?" asked one of the daughters, with a glance of disfavour at a deaf and stertorous boarder, whose courtship, honeymoon, widowerhood and second courtship had all taken place at

Sea View.

"About our age?" added the other. The Misses Patience and Honor Hobbs made a practice of finishing or amplifying each other's sentences, in part because they had been told not to speak together and in part because they liked to confuse a stranger by wearing the same clothes, speaking with the same voice and, on occasion, conducting a conversation by relays.

"All the time, my dears," answered Mrs. Quinlan, with an appraising eye on the They were pretty girls, prettily dressed, and they spoke as if they had been well educated, though a long experience of boarding-houses had made them, like their mother, ruggedly capable of looking after themselves and of securing twenty-one shillings for every sovereign when a boardinghouse keeper intended to give only nineteen. "At the beginning of the summer," she explained, "we have the people who are obliged to take their holidays early. Gauntlett, now, is something in the City. Then, later, when the schools break up, we have another lot. And it's always: hope, Mrs. Quinlan, that you can let us have our usual rooms.' Well, you'll be writing to me in the same way this time next year, Mrs. Hobbs."

"We shall see," replied Mrs. Hobbs, who never pretended to be satisfied when she was not and who hoped that in a year's time one or both of her daughters might be get-

ting married.

Sea View, if the truth were known, was something of a gamble. If nothing came of it, their next year's holiday might have to be curtailed. For three summers now Mrs. Hobbs had been taking Patience and Honor to what she called "the right kind of places for meeting the right kind of people"; but the right kind of people had lately been going to the wrong kind of place. A question designed to lay bare the sincerity of a Llandudno admirer's attentions to Honor

only elicited that he was already married. And the one person who had laid siege to Patience in recent months was a youth at Blackpool, unexceptionable in other ways, who admitted to working in an insuranceoffice and suggested rather hopelessly that, if Miss Hobbs did not mind waiting five or six years, his prospects might improve. The girls, their mother confided to sympathetic friends, were a shade too highspirited for many people. Time and again they had thrown away a good match by making a man ridiculous.

"I hope," she adjured her daughters mournfully, when Mrs. Quinlan had left them to enjoy "a nice rest after the journey and all ", "you will remember not to cheapen yourselves here. Fun is fun . . . Are you

listening, Patience?"

"Yes, mama," replied Honor.

"And you, Honor?"

"Yes, mama," replied Patience.

In short-sleeved pink frocks with shoes and stockings to match, with their brown hair bobbed to an eighth of an inch of the same length, with identical bead necklaces and wrist-watches, the slender, brown-eyed twins almost defied their own mother's power to tell them apart, though from close observation and long experience Mrs. Hobbs knew that the dreamy Patience was generally the model and the mischievous Honor the match-breaking copy.

"Who was the young man you were talking to after tea?" she enquired sus-

piciously.

"That's the young something-in-the-City," explained Honor, who had unaccountably failed to discover Mr. Gauntlett for herself. "Are you wondering if he's eligible, mama?"

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Patience," sighed Mrs. Hobbs. "If you knew how vulgar it sounded . . ."

"It was Honor," Patience returned.

"Whichever of you it was . . ."
"But, mama!" cried Honor. "After that affair at Blackpool, you might at least say whether you think a man is a suitable friend for us . . ."

"His father was a colonel out in India," Patience volunteered, "and his mother was somebody rather important in Scotland . . ."

"I wonder what brings him to a quiet place like this," Mrs. Hobbs murmured.

In three years she had met leading actors, bank-managers and editors of big newspapers who shrank, on leaving their boarding-house audience, into chorus-men, bank-clerks and

unattached journalists.

"He likes it because it's cheap. His people . . . It was quite a romance, mama!" Patience exclaimed with a sudden brightening of her usually sombre eyes. "His mother ran away with his father and was cut off with a shilling; and his brothers and he had the most terrible time when they were children . . ."

"You may think that very romantic . . . ," Mrs. Hobbs began severely. "I

call it acting foolish."

If she sometimes feared that Honor's passion for mischief would keep her from marrying, she feared more that the sentimental Patience, with her yearning for the magic that never—Mrs. Hobbs knew well—came into lives like theirs, would throw herself away on some worthless philanderer with a glib tongue and a winning manner.

"That's only the beginning," Patience continued in tranquil enjoyment of a story that might well have come out of her favourite magazine. "Mr. Gauntlett says that they'd made up their minds the old grandfather would never relent, when suddenly, without any warning, he left them all a

legacy of five thousand pounds."

She looked up to watch what impression she was making; but Honor was dabbing at a stain on one of her shoes and Mrs. Hobbs, methodically checking the clothes of all three by an illegible list, was muttering to herself that her new white skirt was missing.

"I remember putting it in. It can't have walked away . . . Did he tell you all this?"

she interrupted herself to ask.

"Yes!"

"And you believed it?" jeered Honor. "Why not?"

Mrs. Hobbs sniffed in audible con-

tempt:

"You're more simple than I took you for! The son of a colonel! And a sudden legacy! My dear, you may be sure that's what he tells every girl. He wanted to get you interested. Fancy letting yourself be stuffed up with stories like that!"

"I'm not the only one he's stuffed,"
Patience returned in a spirited effort to
preserve her romance. "Mrs. Quinlan told

me, before ever I met him . . ."

"Mrs. Quinlan told you what he told her. The proof of the pudding's in the eating, my dear. I'm not saying a word against Sea View; but, if money was no object, I shouldn't come here. No more would Mas-

ter Gauntlett. It would be Eastbourne or Monte Carlo . . ."

"The legacy only came to him last

month," Patience interrupted.

"And the idea of it only came to him last night, I should say," Mrs. Hobbs rejoined. "Oh, Patience, my dear, don't go and do anything ungenteel! You girls had your lesson at Llandudno."...

Up the bleak stairs and through the bare corridors swelled the note of a gong. Mrs. Hobbs bustled away in the hope of securing places at the long dining-table where they would not always be offered the sparse remains of meats which more fortunate hands had broken in advance of them. The sisters looked at each other.

"Are you getting a crush on him?" Honor enquired with amused interest.

"Mother sickens me with her everlasting suspicions!" cried Patience. "Why shouldn't the story be true?"

"And why should it?" Honor asked

cynically.

"Because he's a gentleman."

"Is he? I think we ought to try him out." Honor paused to see whether Patience would still try to protect her new friend. If she did, the affair would be serious. "You don't mind?"

"He's nothing to me!"

IT.

MRS. QUINLAN found it convenient to dine by herself, behind a screen, in a corner from which she could keep an eye on the kitchen, carve the joints, ration the condiments and speed her hard-breathing waitresses to their work.

She could also, by means of the serving-hatch, keep an eye on her boarders; and she was delighted to observe, on the first night, that the Hobbs sisters looked like becoming popular with their neighbours, who were intrigued by the natural similarity of the twins and amused by their efforts to increase it. When the one took soup, the other took it too; when the one refused sauce with the fish, the other also refused it.

"Do you know Eastcliffe well?" one of them asked Arthur Gauntlett.

"Well, as I told you at tea . . . ," Gauntlett began.

"Me?" the girl interrupted in surprise. "Are you sure it wasn't my sister?"
I...I thought...," the young

man stammered in confusion.

"It's all right!" the girl answered

brightly. "You can go on with me where you left off with her. You were telling her about your mother and the cruel way she'd been treated by your grandfather..."

"Well, there's nothing more to say about that," Gauntlett replied, blushing vividly as he looked at the two sisters in a vain attempt to discover which one he had so rashly taken into his confidence.

"But I should like to hear! Didn't you say that your father was in the Indian army? Were you brought up abroad?"

"No, my father had to look out for a job when he married. There were three of

"Yes, you told me about your brothers . . . ," the girl interrupted in a tone which conveyed that she wished to hear nothing more under that head.

Arthur Gauntlett took temporary refuge in silence. If this was the girl to whom he had described his childhood, she must be the girl whom he had told about his mother's runaway marriage. They had sat together at tea; and, unless sister "B" had slipped into the place of sister "A", when sister "A" went to get a handkerchief, he had only talked to one. In horror he recalled that to one (and he did not know which) he had become almost sentimental about his lonely boyhood. One (and he did not know which) had asked what happened at Sea View in the evenings; he had invited one of them to dance with him. he had offered to shew one of them the view from Lighthouse Head, to one he had let fall carelessly that there was an interesting story attaching to his old grandfather, if she would care to hear it.

"I expect you're tired of being told how extraordinarily alike you are," he observed, after a pause, to the one who had been addressed by her mother as "Honor" a

moment before.

"Well, Honor and I can't see it," was the answer. "There's a family resemblance, of course . . ."

"You ought to wear a big brooch with your initials on," Arthur suggested.

The sisters exchanged a rapid glance and

answered him in chorus:

"Do you know, we always feel that, if people won't take the trouble to tell us apart, it can't matter very much to them which of us they're talking to; and, if that's how they feel about it, they may as well talk to some one else."

By a movement that had the perfection and speed of long practice, Arthur Gauntlett found himself suddenly isolated; and for the rest of dinner he was left to contemplate a turned head and averted shoulder on either side of him. At the end he made overtures of peace and danced with both sisters in turn, never relinquishing the one until he had securely sighted the other. He was, however, no nearer distinguishing them until one mentioned Lighthouse Head and the other called out:

"Take my shawl, P., if you're going on the cliffs."

Then he observed that, though the two girls' bead necklaces were identical, the string of one had been broken and knotted.

"P. for Patience," he whispered to himself. "A knot in time saves nine. Patience on a monument: she has more repose than

her sister."

As they walked away from Sea View, Patience enquired mischievously if Arthur knew which Miss Hobbs was honouring him

with her company.

"I've always known," he replied with quiet assurance. "You tried to confuse me at dinner by answering to your sister's name and pretending I'd said things to her when I'd really said them to you. Didn't you?"

"As you know so much, why ask me?"

she laughed.

They might speak with one voice, but this was the laugh of the girl who had talked to him at tea.

"I could tell which was which in the dark," Arthur boasted.

"That's more than mother can do."

"Ah, but if she were devoted to one . . . I shall never forget how sympathetic you were at tea . . ."

"About your mother? Then it was true?" Patience interrupted eagerly.

"And your father is a colonel?"

"Of course it's true! Is there anything so surprising . . .? I could tell you something much more remarkable. Did you read about a man called Datchley, who died last month? A millionaire? That was my mother's father."

"Who never forgave her?"
Arthur Gauntlett nodded.

"Everything was left to a cousin he'd never seen. And, when the cousin died, the old man left it all to charity," he explained, artistically postponing his climax. "At least, that was the original intention. Afterwards, he became unhappy at the idea that his name would die out, so he made a codicil, leaving everything to the grandson

who married first and took his name. A bit of a windfall, isn't it? More than four millions . . ."

"But which of you gets it?" Patience

gasped.

"The one who marries first. If you've always been poor . . . I never dared look at a girl till now. When I talked about loneliness . . ."

To Patience, the conversation seemed to

be spending itself on side issues.

"But why are you telling all this to me?" she enquired a little breathlessly. "I thought it might interest you," said

Arthur.

"It does! It's quite a romance!"

"The beginning of one, I hope. Patience . . . You don't mind my calling you Patience?"

"Not if you don't shout it out so that Honor can hear."

"But we left her at Sea View."

"She was going to follow us with that young Mr. Chorley who sat on my other side at dinner. We arranged . . . I mean, she thought it would be fun if we changed places in the dark . . . Honor's always doing that. A joke's a joke, I say, but she always carries it too far. It's not every one that's as good-tempered as you . . ."

"I was really rather angry . . . ," Arthur had to confess. "There are quite a few of us, brothers and cousins, all eligible. At this very moment . . . No time to

"But you wouldn't marry just to get the money?" Patience asked uneasily. "You'd have to be in love?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" Arthur assented hurriedly. "Didn't I make it clear . . . ? That was stupid of me. Patience, d'you think you could ever come to care for me? Forget all about the money! I told you about my legacy of five thousand. And ever since I set eyes on you I knew there was no one like you. Patience . . ."

The girl turned on him suddenly as though to see whether he was playing a part.

"If I could feel sure you weren't having a joke with me . . . ," she muttered.

"Ask Mrs. Quinlan! She's known my mother and most of the family for years. Ask the solicitor! I'm not joking!'

III.

On a bench at the top of Lighthouse Head they sat looking in silence on the moonlit sea. To meet at five and to be engaged at ten was sufficiently startling; but for both of them it was now less incredible than that they should pass in a night from a life of narrow means and endless contriving to one in which money could be as much taken for granted as the air they breathed. When last the moon had been full, they had both looked forward to their week at Sea View as to seven days of light in a sunless year; it would be strange to recollect, when next the moon was full, that they had danced to a gramophone in an east-coast boardinghouse or waxed enthusiastic over a prawning expedition.

'You mustn't say anything till I've

told mother," said Patience at last.

Arthur nodded quickly, thankful that she did not expect him to become demonstrative and had not become demonstrative herself.

"You must tell her to-night, then," he stipulated. "If she won't believe you, suggest that she should come to London and see the will."

Patience stared at the shimmering sea without answering. If they went to London, he would take them first-class; and they would go by taxi from Liverpool Street and the taxi would wait outside the solicitor's office until it took them on to luncheon. Which of her sea-side clothes, Patience wondered, would look best in London? And how long would it be before she could buy real-silk stockings?

Let's go back!" she suggested suddenly; and, to both of them, her whisper seemed designed to leave her dream unbroken.

Arthur picked up her shawl and accompanied her down the cliff-path. Though he expected within an hour to be asking for her mother's consent, he could hardly realize that Patience and he were engaged. They had not kissed; and it was by accident only that he had touched her hand. With time and practice he would no doubt acquire the ease and self-confidence of an accomplished lover, but Patience was still a stranger to him; and he could not bring himself to embrace a stranger in cold blood. Should he have become engaged to a stranger? For the first time he was abashed by the risk he was taking with the happiness of this girl who entrusted herself to him so blindly; and, though she was exposing him to as great a risk, he felt that she must have a chance of withdrawing.

"You're very quiet," he murmured.

"Not regretting it?"

"Not if you really meant what you say," she answered with bowed head. "I'm not used to it yet. Why you should pick on me, when there were half a dozen other girls in this house alone . . ."

"I didn't notice them when you came

into the room."

guilty protectiveness warmed to a compassionate liking.

"Do you really think I see so little difference between you?" he asked, as he took her arm.



"It was a toss-up that Honor didn't get in first. If she hadn't started a ladder in her stocking . . ."

Her humility touched him; and his half-

The gramophone was still playing when they reached Sea View, but Patience was in no mood to go back to the recreationroom. Pulling a deck-chair out to the

verandah, she sat down and stared out to sea with her chin on her hand.

"If mother's still about, you might tell her I'm going to bed," she suggested to "Say I want to talk to her first,



"A moment of strained silence ended as a satin slipper starred the looking-glass behind Honor's head."

but don't give her a hint what it is. I shall be in my room, say."

Arthur nodded and hurried into the house, only pausing to call in Mrs. Quinlan's office for a time-table. There was no sign of Mrs. Hobbs or of Honor in the recreation-room; and he returned to the verandah, halting for a moment to study unobserved the girl who was to play so transforming a part in his Seen in profile, the grave little face was appealing in its expression of bewilderment; under the tightly wrapped shawl her figure was slight and graceful; she had pretty hands, thin ankles and small feet. One might have gone much farther and fared much worse.

At the same time, Arthur could have

wished that she had slipped upstairs before he returned. He had never dreamed that it could be so difficult to say "good-night" to anyone! If he shook hands, she would think him cold; if he kissed her, she might

think him presumptuous; and, if he did nothing, he was only shelving his difficulties till the morrow.

"I think the others must have gone to bed," he announced.

"I must go too," answered a drowsy voice. "This air, after that stifling train . . . I shall see you in the morning."

As she continued to sit staring out to sea, Arthur decided that something more was expected of him. Perhaps she too was thinking that they must begin, sooner or later. to behave like engaged people. As she did not offer him her hand, he decided that she was nerving herself to be kissed.

"You're not going to leave me like this?" he challenged her, with a lop-sided smile.

The girl turned with a start that set his unsteady resolution rocking. What

d'you

mean?" she asked.

"Aren't you going to say good-night to me?" It was, he felt, a case of "now or never". Looking round to assure himself that they were alone, he bent swiftly over her chair and kissed her cheek. That, he told himself with relief, was that. It was less difficult, when one made up one's mind to it, than he had imagined; and he straightened his back again with a sense that he had done all that was required of a man newly engaged. "Good-night! Sleep well!" he whispered. "To-morrow . . .

His speech was cut short by a round-arm blow that knocked him against the wall of the house and filled his head with shooting lights and clashing echoes. The smack of

an open palm, confused with a sob of amazement and dismay, was drowned in the patter of hurrying footsteps. As he nursed his tingling cheek, Arthur became conscious of a new, inquisitive figure and an angry buzz of questions and answers.

"If he thinks he can behave like that to me . . . I don't care if it's unladylike or not! Little cad! Don't 'hush' me, I tell you he is! I was sitting here, mama . . . He did! Bent down and kissed

me. If he tries it again . . ."

"Leave him to me!" said Mrs. Hobbs "Now, sir . . . You had with authority. better go to bed, Honor . . ."

"'Honor'?" repeated Arthur in a

whisper.

IV.

Patience was in bed when her sister broke white-faced into their room, demanding whether she still regarded Mr. Arthur Gauntlett as a gentleman. She sat up, as Honor began her tale; and, when their mother came in five minutes later, the two girls were standing with their hands on their hips and their faces close together, in an exchange of invective that was none the less deadly for being conducted in whispers.

"It serves you jolly well right!" Patience

was repeating savagely.

"And you believed that stuff?" Honor was asking with forced and ferocious laughter. "Isn't he a prince in disguise as well? forgive him! How can you blame him? If you go about asking for it . . ."

"You'll laugh the other side of your

mouth to-morrow!"

Mrs. Hobbs parted the disputants and turned to Patience with a cold fury that caused both girls to quail.

"And now will you explain yourself?"

she asked.

"I've been waiting for the chance ever since I came in," Patience replied. "Arthur Gauntlett has asked me to marry him . . . "

"'Arthur'! You mean you let a man you'd never seen till this afternoon, a man

you know nothing about . . ."

"I know all you want to hear!" Patience retorted brusquely. "Of course you won't believe me, but Mrs. Quinlan can tell you who he is and whether he can provide for me properly. We ought to be able to manage, if we're careful: he'll inherit four million or so when he marries . . ."
"Sad, I call it," Honor soliloquized

audibly. "She was all right till to-day.

And we've had nothing of this kind in the family before . . ."

Patience controlled herself with an effort

that made her pulses hammer.

"I sent him to find you," she continued, "and, as soon as my back was turned, this vile creature sat down in my chair, pretended to be me, led him on . . ."

"I didn't lead him on!" protested Honor.

"He wouldn't have kissed you if you hadn't!"

"I should think he'd kiss almost anyone."

"Well, he didn't kiss me?!"

"Don't give up hope. '. . . Put down that shoe, Patience! If you dare to throw

A moment of strained silence ended as a satin slipper starred the looking-glass behind Honor's head. Simultaneously three voices hissed with the vengeful rage of a trodden adder:

"I'll throw the other, if you're not

careful!"

"I wonder you girls aren't ashamed of yourselves!"

"Mad, of course, for a long time, but never violent before . . ."

Then all three fell silent as Mrs. Quinlan's hospitable voice was heard enquiring whether

she might come in.

"I felt I must see that you girls had everything you wanted," she explained. "You here, too, Mrs. Hobbs? What I say is, if you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself; and, though my maids are good girls, you can't expect to find old heads on young shoulders. Now, are you comfortable, my dears? I want you to think of me as your hostess more than . . . well, anything else. Did you get everything you wanted at dinner? I should like you to feel that you're enjoying yourselves."

"We are. More than we can say," Honor

replied dryly.

"I'm so glad! I can see you're going to be very popular. Ever so many people have asked me about you. It's the likeness, you know. I can't see how anyone's to tell you apart."

"You'll find out if you watch," said Honor. "My sister is always such a success

with men . . ."

"I did notice that Some-One-Who-Shall-Be-Nameless . . . ," Mrs. Quinlan began

"Who is that young man?" asked Mrs. Hobbs with detachment. "He seems very anxious to be friends."

"Mr. Gauntlett? Oh, he's a real gentleman," Mrs. Quinlan assured her. "Goodness me, I shouldn't like to say when it was that his mother brought him here first. I was able to make her special terms, poor lady . . ."

"Why do you call her 'poor lady'?"

asked Mrs. Hobbs.

"Seeing that we met him for the first time to-day . . . ," began Mrs. Hobbs with

more dignity than ingenuousness.

"The boy's so full of his good fortune that he can't keep it to himself," laughed Mrs. Quinlan. "The first night he was here he came into my room and said: 'I've great news,' he said. 'I'm a rich man,' he said. 'I'm very glad to hear it,' I said. 'Has your wicked old grandfather died at last?' 'Not yet,' he said, 'but he's suddenly remembered my existence. Read that!' And he gave me the letter from the solicitor. Five thousand pounds, I think it was. I told him, as I tell you, there's no one I'd sooner see having a bit of luck. If I'd been old Mr. Datchley, I'd have left him twice the amount."

"Is he a grandson of the Datchley who died a few weeks ago?" asked Mrs. Hobbs.

"One of them," answered Mrs. Quinlan. "Well, here am I gossiping, when you ought to be asleep after your journey and all. Good-night, my dears! Good-night, Mrs. Hobbs! And, if there's anything you'd like altered, any special little dish you fancy, all you have to do is to slip into my room and let me know."

v.

NEITHER Mrs. Hobbs nor her daughters slept that night for more than a few minutes at a time. Though the door between their rooms stood open, however, they did not try to relieve their vigil by talking. Confronted with possibilities too tremendous for adequate comment, Mrs. Hobbs decreed that nothing more was to be said that night. And, with a pink satin slipper lying at the foot of a shattered looking-glass, the girls were in no mood to reopen the discussion.

At seven o'clock a door below them was opened cautiously; and a young man with a towel round his neck sauntered towards the beach.

"He's good-looking," admitted Honor

from her hiding-place behind the curtains.

"You think so?" Patience drawled with condescension.

"Yes. Don't sulk, P. It was an accident. I wouldn't have slapped his face if you'd told me; but, when a strange man kisses me, I have to make a formal protest. And you'd said he was nothing to you. If you like, I'll apologize."

"I don't suppose he ever wants to see you again. . . . Well, mother? I hope you had a good night? I didn't; and I've a splitting headache. So, if you want to talk

about yesterday . . ."

Mrs. Hobbs shook a troubled head and sat down in a chair by the window.

"I want to know what you and that young man said to each other," she answered. "I should like you to have all that money can buy . . ."

"If he's in love with me . . . ," Patience

began.

Mrs. Hobbs looked mournfully at the young faces peeping over the disordered bed-clothes. It seemed that she had not realized the inexperience of these girls whom she was wont to consider grown-up and marriageable.

"Love between you and a man you never saw till yesterday!" she exclaimed. "My dear, my dear, if he wasn't so desperately anxious to be married at all costs..."

"We're going to marry whether he inherits this money or not," Patience declared. "That ought to shew whether he's in love with me or just making use of me. He has his legacy. And we're going to be married at once. If he still wants me," she added with a vindictive glance at her sister.

"I've said I'll apologize," Honor replied

with unwonted meekness.

"You can keep your apologies to yourself! I don't trust you. If you had half a chance, you'd play another trick of the same kind."

"You don't seem very certain of him! If I felt like that . . . 'Mean to say, it's not much use for him to be in love with you if he always kisses me by mistake . . . Are you coming to bathe?"

"No. I've said my head's splitting . . ."

Honor smiled to herself as she threw back the bed-clothes and began to put on her bathing-dress. It was of black-bordered orange, with a black bathing-cap and black shoes lacing to the knees. When she chose it a week before, she had suggested to Patience that it would be amusing to "try out" a man by pretending simultaneously to drown and leaving him to shew which he preferred to save.

"What am I to say if he asks me whether I've thought better of it?" Honor enquired mischievously, as she surveyed the reflection of her slim figure on the undamaged side of the looking-glass.

Without deigning to answer, Patience sprang out of bed, forgetful of her headache, and put on her own bathing-dress.

"If he wants me to go up to London, are you coming?" she asked her mother.

Mrs. Hobbs sat upright in her chair as though she realized for the first time that Patience had made up her mind. If the girl married young Gauntlett, there would be a house in London and another in the country, a villa in the south of France, motor-cars and clothes . .

"Everything," Mrs. Hobbs found herself saying, "except love. And millionaires don't fall in love with you at first sight, whatever the pictures may say . . ."

"I don't know what to think," sighed, but the girls had already left the room.

Hurrying to the window, Mrs. Hobbs saw them coming out on the verandah below. They were still arguing, but their voices became hushed at the patter of footsteps from the beach. Young Arthur Gauntlett, pink-faced and wet-haired, was approaching at a trot. She saw Patience thrusting Honor behind her and advancing to the steps of the verandah. Gauntlett paused to light a cigarette, then came on, wringing his bathing-dress. His pink cheeks flushed crimson as he saw the two girls awaiting him; and Mrs. Hobbs heard a muttered greeting.

"Good-morning," Patience replied graciously. "I saw you going out, so I hurried after you. I want to explain about last

night.

"No explanations necessary," Gauntlett

replied awkwardly.

"-Well, I want to apologize," said Patience, holding out her hand. "My sister is sometimes a little thoughtless . . . "

Gauntlett bowed over the outstretched

hand.

"It's for me to apologize," he protested. "I assumed it must be Patience, as you were sitting where I'd left her . . ."

Mrs. Hobbs heard a choke and turned to the door as Patience hurried inside and raced up the stairs three at a time. Arthur

Gauntlett, it seemed, was not trying to detain her. On the verandah a slightly mocking voice was drawling:

"Well, I think that's torn it."

Mindful of the consideration promised her overnight by her landlady, Mrs. Hobbs rang to ask if breakfast might be served Thither, an hour later, came in her room. Arthur Gauntlett in London clothes.

"I telegraphed, first thing this morning, to my solicitor," he explained.

him I was coming to see him."

"Indeed?" Mrs. Hobbs answered. "And I don't quite know what I'm to say," he continued.

 $^{\prime\prime\prime}$ I'm sure I can't help you."

"Patience can. I must know how we

stand. Last night . . ."

He broke off as the communicating-door opened and Patience came in. By the pallor of her cheeks and the dark rings to her eves she was at last easily distinguishable.

"I want to talk to Mr. Gauntlett alone," she told her mother. "I shan't be more than a minute. Thank you!" She waited for the door to close and then turned to "I'm sorry about last night. oughtn't to have said 'yes'. It was madness when we were utter strangers. I don't blame you. I might have made just the same mistake if I'd met one of your brothers."

"If you can forget it . . . ," Arthur

began eagerly.

Patience shook her head:

"That's impossible. I've seen how mad we were, but it was an appalling temptation. If you've always been poor . . . But you have! You know! It was the same temptation for you. We can't blame each other without blaming ourselves, but I do blame your grandfather for putting such a temptation in anybody's way. Thank goodness we pulled up in time.

She held out her hand, but he refused to see it. The interview, difficult as he had expected it to be, became intolerable when this girl, instead of flying out at him, insisted on sharing the blame. In writing herself down to his mercenary level, she wrote herself up to a level that he would never If compunction, overnight, warmed to protectiveness and liking, admiration was now warming to something like love. Patience startled, Patience incredulous, Patience ecstatic made a weaker appeal than Patience crestfallen, but dignified, uncomplaining and generous.

"Are you trying to send me away?" he

asked.

"It wouldn't be a happy marriage if I mean so little to you that you can't even recognize me," she answered wistfully. "Be honest, Mr. Gauntlett! You proposed to me—and I accepted you—simply to get that money . . ."

"I should want to marry you if the money were absolutely wiped out! I have my

legacy . . ."

Patience walked to the window and looked down. A decrepit fly was standing at the door, ready no doubt to take him to the station. If he would only send it away, she would have time to think. If he would do anything to shew that he could dissociate her from his grandfather's money . . .

"Those millions! I feel they're bewitching us!" she sighed. "If you'd heard my mother and sister . . . I believe Honor would have taken my place for the asking!"

"Do you really mean that?"

Patience was beginning to answer, but the words died on her lips and she spun round as though she had been struck.

"You . . . you'll miss your train, if

you aren't careful," she panted.

"There's not much point in my going

now . . . ," he grumbled.

"If you don't go . . . and at once . . . No, I shan't box your ears. I can leave that to Honor. You . . . you . . . Yes, go to your solicitor! Tell him what you've done, tell him what I've told you. I don't care how cheap he thinks us. Tell him that I believed in you, in spite of last night. Tell him that I'd have said 'yes' five minutes ago. Would Honor take my place? You dare ask me that? Go! Don't let me ever see you again! And don't ask Honor to take my place till you're quite sure which of us you're speaking to. I shan't let you off another time. Go! Go! Go!"

Hereafter follows The Adventure of the Incorruptible Bachelor.

A BOWL OF ROSES.

THERE is no woman who can place
A bowl of roses on a shelf
Without an inward, upward urge
To be more beautiful herself.

There is no woman who can keep Disorder reigning in a room Where chastely, fresh cut roses shed The light and fragrance of their bloom.

Something there is of sun and wind— Of rain, and clean bright summer air Held captive when a bowl is filled With roses—and placed anywhere—

That works a charm on ugliness, And lightens all dark-cornered gloom; A bowl of roses can perform A miracle in any room.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL:



MEN WERE DECEIVERS EVER.

OLD SALT: Sail, sir?
VISITOR: No, thanks. I'm a poor sailor.
OLD SALT: Poor sailor? Who's lent yer that outfit? I thought you was a dook.

Bird-Proc

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

TF you kill any more rabbits," said I to Miss Patricia Daly, "you may carry them home yourself. On the understanding that you were coming out after grouse for the family pot, I'll admit I

volunteered to ghillie for you. But at lugging more than six couple of rabbits in and out of the bogs on this rough moor, I draw

the line."

"A properly keepered grouse moor doesn't have rabbits on it," said Patricia, " or crows. Besides, Bitters chopped one of those bunnies on its form. Didn't you, you nasty poaching old female? But I will say, Uncle Peter, you are getting the crows down. There's another deader; that makes the fifth I have counted this morning, and yesterday I must have seen a dozen."

"My girl," I said, "those are rooks. you continue to ignore the difference between a rook and a crow, I shall resign my uncleship. Also I shall trot you out as a horrible example the next time I make a

speech about Votes for Flappers."

"I don't want the silly vote," said Patricia. "To tell us we've equal chances with men is all skittles. Now I ask you: why don't you let me have a butt amongst the rest when you are grouse-driving? I shoot quite as well as most of them."

"At rabbits you're a nailer. But a day's grouse-driving isn't only marksmanship.

There's the luncheon."

"If," said my adopted niece, "you think the luncheon yarns would be too strong for the likes of me, it's little you know my character. Tell me, though, how do you poison these crows—rooks, I mean? I'm always on for picking up a bit of gamekeeping."

"We don't poison them. They just die. I'm rather sorry, too. I like rooks, though frankly I always shy at rook-pie. But there's no getting over the fact that the rook's a very useful gamekeeper for the farmer, if you don't have too many of him. He eats

wire-worms and other kinds of nuisance of that description, and quite earns the toll he levies in exchange—if, as I say, there aren't too many of him."

"This fowl," said Patricia, turning over the dead rook with the toe of a particularly soppy and peat-smeared boot, "seems to have died like the sportsman in the historybook did, of a surfeit of lampreys."

"Caterpillars, I should suggest," said I, stooping down to look at the deceased's beak. Then I opened my pen-knife and did a bit of a post-mortem while Patricia strolled away. The rook's stomach was wadded out with big caterpillars, knobbly things, about two inches and a quarter long, and Cambridge blue in colour. They were strange to me, but there's nothing in that: I'm not a caterpillar expert. They had a funny smell of oranges. So I told Patricia the coroner's verdict was that the deceased had died of over-stoking, and hoped it would be a lesson to her.

"I don't often like to pin myself down to things, as you know," said my adopted niece, "such as promising not to marry an actor, or an anarchist, or a Bolshie, or any of the other brands you have so strong a personal dislike to. But I'd be dutiful this time, Uncle, and undertake not to make a beast of myself over these sky-blue caterpillars, though I suppose you, after the funny crawly things you've lunched off in Africa and Brazil and that sort of place, would find them quite nutty and interest-Ugh! aren't they loathsome? The moor seems stocked with them. And each one's getting on with its quiet work.'

I spread out a piece of newspaper in which I had carelessly wrapped my bread and cheese. "Here's a thing that caught my eye when I was gormandising just now. 'The food taken by the silk-worm in 56 days equals 86,000 times the worm's original weight at hatching!' I wonder if that applies to light blue knobbly caterpillars?

If so, they must be mowing down the heather and the bent on this moor in style, and that'll account for your not finding many grouse-birds to shoot at, Patricia."

"I wish," said Miss Patricia Daly, "you'd have your lunch done up decently in sandwich paper, Uncle. I hate to see a man get slatternly about his feeding habits."

Looking backwards, of course, it seems absurd that we did not give the blue caterpillars more than a passing notice in those days. Indeed, Patricia Daly and I stood out amongst the earlier discoverers. The things appeared first of all, according to the Enquiry, on the high moorlands of Yorkshire and Cumberland, and did not spread to the lower grounds till next year. Hawk moths shouldn't have appeared there. But they did, and the reasons have still to be explained. It was an extraordinarily hard winter, too, and an abomin-



"'Tell me, though, how do you poison these crows—rooks, I mean? I'm always on for picking up a bit of gamekeeping,"



by full name and handle; and it made

me rather sick at times to see a nice girl

that I had known ever since she was a

ably wet spring. But neither the chrysalides nor the subsequent hatch-out of moths appeared to have suffered. That was the first hint one got of the creatures' hardihood,

kid openly adoring a man who wasn't a gentleman and who (if I was a judge) was a good many other undesirable things besides.

And then, of course, there was the matter of my young cousin, Dick. Dick took it very hard. He was just beginning to get a bit of a practice too. However, he was not the sort of lad to stay sobbing on the doorstep, and he decided there were far more openings for a barrister in Nigeria, and took the next boat to that health-resort to make his theory good. I was really mad about Dick, and to say that I wanted to smack Patricia Daly is putting it mildly.

There was no question about Blackland's stock of brains, underneath his colourless hair, or of his push. He'd fought on the Home Front in the War, behind a microscope on the top floor of a Whitehall office, and of course that put people against him at once. But he found out something about beri-beri and rice-grains that a medical general at the club told me saved thousands of lives amongst our coloured troops and labour battalions, and when the badges were handed round Ernest Blackland got one of the glitterers. Also he'd the sense to commercialise his process, or whatever it was, and made a hatful of money out of it. He got foreign orders too—the peacock or something of that kind from Siam, and a weird thing from Japan, and other odds and ends from the other rice-eating countries. He didn't brag about these, you understand, but somehow or other you weren't with him long before you knew they were in the lower drawer of the safe. He was thirty-five to Patricia's twenty-two when they got engaged. So there was nothing much wrong with the ages. But a lad of twenty-eight would have made a better— However, never mind about that. Anyway, twentyeight is about the best age for standing up against the West African climate.

The mortality amongst the rooks ought to have given us the tip the first year, but, as I say, it didn't; and even though other birds lay about the pleasant face of the countryside untidily dead, nobody drew the right deductions. I suppose we are pretty slow at the uptake in these Blessed Islands when scientific facts are staring at us. Or, to be quite accurate, nobody announced that he had deduced the cause of the mortality. I make that reservation because it is reasonably certain that Sir Ernest Blackland, K.B.E., had tumbled to what was

happening from the very start, and knew what would follow, and was preparing his method of operations. Only he sat pat on his hand.

He must have got the tale of the rooks -and I'll bet she called them crows—from Patricia Daly at Harrogate at the Bramham Hunt Ball where they first met. She told it as one up against me: The Idle Ghillie and the Rabbits of the Eager Huntress sort of thing. The post-mortem with the penknife would be merely dragged in to show how I would do anything to dodge rabbitcarrying. Did he bat an eyelash? Did he put an interested question? Did he show up as the bright young man of science who ran down the beri-beri bug? Nothing doing. But about a week later Patricia invited herself to come up and stay with us, and asked me if I should recognise a chrysalis if I met one walking in the street.

"Chrysalises, me young friend, are of many

sorts," said I ponderously.

"Possibly. But the plural appears to be chrysalides. Better go to school again, Uncle Peter, if you want to be as perfect as the young. Anyway, I'm now a chrysalis hunter on our stern Yorkshire moorlands. Are you on for helping? They're less ponderous to carry than rabbits, and if we take our guns along we may bring back a brace of birds for the pot. Empty matchboxes are the only other gear required. I wonder if crows eat chrysalides?"

"Rooks, I expect you're thinking about. It is the rook that's the Farmer's Friend. They'll eat all they can lay beaks on—rooks will: not crows. As the woodcock are beginning to blow in you shall have my gun and countenance by way of escort, and if you choose to shoot up to four couple of rabbits, nothing unpleasant will be said!"

However, Miss Daly, as Diana, was a bit of a failure that day. Rabbits she'd no eye for, and snipe tickled her not. We walked slap on the top of a revival meeting of seven grouse that were all easy shots and she didn't even get her gun up till it was too late. Bitters and I gathered my right and left in a reproving silence. I had heard of the unpleasant Sir Ernest, but till then refused to believe that anything could put Patricia off her keenness for sport. However, there it was: a bad case evidently. She filled her matchboxes with pupæ, and I went down from the hill exceeding sorrowful. Bitters improved the occasion by putting on the slouch of extreme grief. She also knew our Patricia's ways. Sound old bitch, Bitters, with the family interest filling her heart. I always swear she's a spaniel, whatever the ribald say. She's smelling mildly on my hearthrug this minute, and at intervals grunts in her sleep. I am sure that by some kind of telepathy she is dreaming this history as I write it.

My study and other parts of the house got a good deal upset by the search for packing material during the next week, and many shipments were made to Sir E. Blackland, K.B.E., Whitehall, S.W. I wish they'd poisoned the bounder. But then, to come down to hard tacks, if he'd gone out, or if Patricia hadn't done her job, I suppose we should none of us be alive to-day, and the world would be a clean-scraped blank, smelling of blue caterpillars. Have I told you about the smell? It was like oranges: rather pleasant, but pretty penetrating. And except for Blackland nobody ever did anything with Choerocampa Universitas, or knew how to strafe it. Of course, he started He would. But he delivered the goods in the end, and nobody else did. one must give the bounder his due.

And that ended what came to be called the First Year of the Caterpillar.

Things simmered down for the winter. Patricia Daly put in a lot of time on the hills looking for pupæ, but found none. As we know now, this particular caterpillar, like one or two others of the hawk moths, digs a fairly deep hole in the ground, and then builds himself a cocoon of chewed stick and other odds and ends, and turns in to sleep through the rough weather. About the middle of May out she crawls as a big sky-blue moth with a dark blue bar across her, dries her wings, and flies off on the nectar hunt. She doesn't specialise on one flower, petunia, for instance, or verbena, like the other hawk moths. She seems able to suck nutriment from anything that carries a blossom. Also she eats during the night as well as the day. Apparently she never sleeps.

In due time she lays eggs, and goes beyond all hawk conventions in the number of her family. Four hundred eggs is a decent clutch for an ordinary hawk moth. *Universitas* seems to waver between twenty and thirty thousand. Others of the tribe sometimes wait for ten months before they hatch out. The *Universitas* caterpillar has the horn at the end of his nose through the eggshell in five days. Other baby hawk

caterpillars suffer from chills, sunstroke, and birds—especially birds. The *Universitas* youngster is cold- and heat-proof, and she is rank poison to any bird that flies.

It took the rooks two years to find out the unwholesomeness of the *Universitas* caterpillar, and their species was pretty nearly exterminated in Great Britain before the knowledge of the death-trap soaked into the thick heads of the survivors. Other birds got there more quickly, and it is a fact, so far as the Enquiry could discover, that no bird of any sort, size, or description was found dead of *Universitas* poisoning after the end of the second year. But they died of starvation, as other things did.

During that Second Year Patricia Daly began to bring me sums, and to ask if her figures were right.

If one lady Universitas moth lays 20,000 eggs in a year, and all these hatch out, and there are no casualties, there ought to be 10,000 ladies for next season—for the Third Year, that is. She ignored the gentleman moths, as they would not compete in the egg business. Still this handful would produce, theoretically of course, 200 million caterpillars for Year Three. And, of course, there must have been a good many millions of the Universitas beasts sitting up and doing business in the First Year, when we found those crows-sorry, rooks-and therefore trillions to be multiplied with her paltry 200 millions for Year Three. Were her figures right, please, Uncle Peter, and what did I think about it?

"First of all, my dear," I said, "you needn't get hot bearings over a sense of personal responsibility. I know you seem to be the original discoverer, but you didn't invent the beasts, nor import them out of space. You may think yourself jolly lucky the scientific gents didn't label them Choerocampa Patricia Daly instead of C. Universitas. Secondly, I should say your figures are a distinct under-estimate. The filthy things seem to be all over the world. They have mown down tea-gardens in Darjeeling, and they're eating holes into the Burmah teak forests. They're making deserts in Uganda, Lapland and Italy, and this morning's paper says they're shifting matto at the sides of the Amazon which have beaten man, fire, and all other insects so far."

"Also in South Carolina, and Louisiana, and Alabama there isn't a cotton shrub left," said Patricia. "I'm afraid I'm a bit parochial. I'm not worrying about those out-of-the-way places. I'm thinking about

your moors here, and my bit of shooting. There'll be no grouse for me to pot at, whether I get my woman's rights and am asked to your big driving days, or have to dodder about on my own, if all the heather and stuff are eaten off. Uncle, have you been on to Prior's Moor lately?"

"Too busy."

"Too idle. Well, in big patches the ground is eaten down to the bare mud—or muck, you might call it, because *Universitas* seems to leave a horrid kind of slime as *débris* after meals. There aren't even dead sticks like you see after a heather burn."

I didn't like to break into this specialised view with a comment that the caterpillars were also eliminating the grasslands, the cornlands, the potato fields and all the rest of the food-producing parts of Great Britain and elsewhere, and that general famine and starvation were next on the list. We are a grouse-shooting household, and most of our friends are of the opinion that the grouse bird is Heaven's kindliest effort. So I said, "What you ought to do, Patricia, if you want to get the moors back to their form, is to evolve some bird, like a variety of carrion crow, for instance, which can devour Universitas without getting pains in his duodenum."

"But, you idiot, Uncle, it was the crows that first found out the beasts were poisonous. Oh, sorry, but those were rooks, you said. Still, they're the same thing."

"They aren't. But never mind. What's that young man of yours doing in the

matter?"

"I think he's dropped it," said Patricia shortly. "But I don't know. It's rather a sore subject. He's Board of Agriculture amongst other things, and he says they're

priceless fools."

"Oh, they're that," I admitted. "They still consider the pole-axe the best cure for Foot and Mouth disease, and strafe anybody who tries to do a bit of research on different lines. Carrying on the same policy, they suggest farmers and landowners should go out on to infected grounds, and slither over them, and kill the caterpillars with their feet. In order to be still more helpful, they issue a pattern of boot especially adapted for the job."

"Our Government departments, when they try and touch the scientific side, are

the limit," said Miss Daly bitterly.

I cocked an eye of interest. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee?"

"A stable tip came my way," the lady admitted.

"Still the filthy things are not without their uses. Dick writes they've eaten off the bush from some alluvial tin areas where he is, up the Benue, and he and a couple of pals have financed a dredge, and hope to make a sufficient pile to retire on in six months. That's good for Dick, isn't it?"

"Topping," said Patricia, and looked a

bit thoughtful.

"All the same, you might tell me," I persisted, "is Blackland doing anything in the matter?"

"Couldn't say," Patricia snapped. And then, "Look here, Uncle Peter, it's no use trying to pump me. Ernest tells me nothing of what's going on in his lab. He isn't allowed to."

I told her I quite understood, and the subject dropped. All the same, I very much wondered what that tall tow-headed expert, who had caught the beri-beri bug, was up to. He'd made a pile out of his first discovery, and I'd reason to know that besides his official research shop in Whitehall he'd another establishment where Choerocampa Universitas was the one and only object of interest. Sir Ernest Blackland, K.B.E., was an amazingly clever man. But he wasn't in the least a philanthropist. There were possibilities . . . I wondered.

The Press were slow in taking to Choero-campa Universitas. I suppose the name put them off. But once they had got their teeth into it, they kept a good hold. The scare grew, and from the London Times to the Monrovia Trumpet, from the Petit Journal to the Picayune, they gave space to all the caterpillar copy they could collect.

Quack cures of course abounded, and cures that were sound in theory but failed when put in practice. New Thoughters and the Wish-Curers went for the caterpillars plague all-out; Zero's One-Night Cure Co. spent a quarter of a million to tell people that their specific, used as a spray, killed the caterpillars at a touch—and netted two millions in these special sales; and His Majesty's Opposition in the House of Commons kept up a steady yap at the Government's lethargy in letting these things be.

The Zero mixture was sound enough. So also was an arsenical drench that had exterminated some locust swarms. But you can't spray the whole world with either arsenic or Zero. There isn't time, for one

thing, and there aren't enough of these chemicals to go round, for another. Mr. J. B. Barley, the well-known Oologist, discovered that the male blue-tit can pick off the fleas with which C. Universitas is infested, without harm to himself, and that the caterpillar so denuded dies of cold, or lone-liness, or something like that. But the blue-tit is not a particularly common bird, and intensive breeding seemed off the map. So that cure, though well-intentioned, came to nothing also. No other feathered creature offered itself. It was the birds, our protecting birds, that were allowing all vegetable creation to be eaten away.

And in the meanwhile the cohorts, and the legions and the myriads of the caterpillar had spread themselves over the face of the Earth and were rapidly moving down every green thing that grew upon it. The blueness of them changed landscapes. The orange smell of them grew nauseating to the nostrils.

Grain crops, roots, fruits, and salads went down before the reapers; grasslands were shaved to the dirt; sheep starved; cows were turned into beef; poultry vanished; gamebirds soared to enormous prices and then disappeared from the market; the nip of starvation grew tighter and tighter in every land. Barring a cure, barring some tremendous thing that would kill off the swarms of blue caterpillars that were in the Third Year increasing by the billion-billionbillion per annum, chaos loomed ahead. trifle that caterpillars would also commit suicide by eating off all the world's greenstuff was not consoling. We humans should have preceded them.

Patricia had adopted me firmly as an Uncle again by this time, and in the effort to please was now speaking of all crows as rooks when we saw them during our walks over the moors together. Carrion birds, by the way, flourished, I suppose because there was so much of the stock that had starved The wretched farmers had even to death. at the end of the Third Year given up trying to bury the corpses, and the smell of them at times overpowered the orange stench of the caterpillars. Patricia, even to the fond avuncular eye, was losing her looks. had been a plumpish young thing with two very hard-worked dimples at the corner of her mouth. She and Dick were always ragging about those pleasing depressions. Blackland, I presume, was not a dimple fancier. Anyway, they changed into a sort of wrinkles, and crow's-foot wrinkles spread out from the corners of her eyes, and then up-and-down wrinkles began to plough a track between her eyebrows. In that twelve-month Patricia aged ten years. I mentally damned Blackland's chilly blue eyes every time I noticed these things.

They did not spend much time together, he and she. Patricia is fond of outdoor sport, and the tow-headed Blackland always looked to me a fellow of the etiolated habit. He was a man who flourished only in a laboratory atmosphere. I stuck to it that he was very nearly an albino, a type and tribe that I believe find ordinary sunlight actively unpleasant. Besides, London, with its enormous reservoirs of scientific supplies, was the only place, said Sir Ernest Blackland, where he could get the tackle he wanted promptly and without waiting for Patricia wilted in London. At the end of a week she always had to get away into the country to enjoy a mouthful of air that had not been breathed before. So beyond a daily exchange of letters they had little enough to do with one another.

I think I was the only other person who knew, but Patricia was beginning to realise by this time that she had made a mess of She was probably a bit awed and certainly a good deal bored by Blackland, but beyond a doubt she was beginning to miss poor old Dick terribly. Dick was a good letter-writer-to me, anyway. This was possibly because he liked me, and possibly because he knew Patricia stayed with us a good lot, and correspondence from the back of beyond is apt to be handed along round a breakfast-table. Anyway, I hand the descriptive letter-writer's medal to Dick. Fishing in the Benue river; the caterpillars; crocodile shooting in adjacent creeks; tindredging in obscene and obscure lagoons; more about caterpillars; shortage of all sorts of chop (which is West Africanese for food-stuffs); habits of the local pagans, inedibility of C. Universitas, further decrease in chop supplies, and corresponding increase in cannibalism amongst the pagans; vast hauls of alluvial tin from the two dredges; and still more about the caterpillars; these were his topics.

I flipped this letter across with a suggestion that Patricia should write and tell Dick that nigger baby tasted best trussed and baked like sucking-pig. I said it reminded one of lemon sole if you merely boiled it.

"Ugh!" said she. "And I shouldn't be a bit surprised to hear you'd eaten one done that way, Uncle Peter, during your Governorship. I'm afraid Dick's having a filthy time, poor old bean."

"He's making hatfuls of money by his own account."

"As if that mattered! He'd have been making hatfuls at the Bar here by now

making hatfuls at the Bar here by now if only he'd stuck to it. He doesn't say

anything about his health."

"One doesn't in writing from Nigeria to an old Coaster. We take the climate for granted. At the same time, the Tropical Diseases fellows are making life out there a lot easier these days and—well—longer. Also, of course, in all the best camps there's a rule against more than two dozen cocktails before dinner."

Patricia spluttered. "Dick never—"She started, and there stopped. "Well, as you don't look like facing the rain, Uncle Peter, I'll go and take the dogs for a walk. I'll read the rest of Dick's letter when I have time, and then you shall have it back."

It was about this time that Blackland first emerged into print as an item of live news. Up till then he had not been a man who came into the open much. He'd push enough, as I have said, but it was of the Quality A 1, Dept. Backstairs, variety. Even the beri-beri job was put through for the most part behind closed doors, though at that time, of course, the Government warcensorship was so strict that the papers weren't even allowed to publish the news that an eminent statesman used a handkerchief to blow his nose.

Specialists knew of Ernest Blackland, of course, but to the general public his name, if they ever heard of it, was merely that of a scientist who did jobs of work for the British Government and any other solvent firms who cared to employ him, at rather exorbitant fees.

But, as I say, it was about the time I got Dick's letter about the pagans' regrettable lapse into old customs, that the fellow came into the open. He probably achieved a record in quick and wide publicity. I have no cutting of his first letter to the papers, but it ran somehow like this:—

Strafing Choerocampa Universitas was so much everybody's business that nobody in a big enough way had tackled it: no Government, that is. Fate did not crawl along on caterpillars' legs: it galloped. Every day was bringing the total destruction of civilisation and all the furniture of the universe æons nearer.

Here was a chance for the League of Nations. Personally he had no opinion of that body. He had observed it as doing little but talk, so far. But he wanted to be fair. He would go further. He pledged his professional reputation that the extinction of C. Universitas was possible. The method would be electrical. If the League of Nations wished to pull its weight, let it get busy on the matter whilst the going was good. If the job was too big, let the League say so and make room for a man who could deliver the prescription.

At the foot of this document, which probably every newspaper in the world printed in more or less understandable shape within the week, he signed himself E. Blackland. and nine hundred and ninety-nine readers out of every thousand wondered who on earth he might be. The papers explained. They gave him paragraphs, articles, leaders. None of them, it appeared, had the material for even a faked-in-the-office biographynot even the enterprising Press of New York City, which would, if called upon, cheerfully describe the breakfast-table talk of the Emperor of Greenland at ten minutes' notice. People by that time—it was well on in the Fourth Year of the Caterpillars —were desperately afraid, and not even the most yellow of the American Press dare tackle a possible saviour flippantly. the end of the world looms near, even the journalist thinks before he turns out copy.

CATERPILLARS CAN BE KILLED ELECTRICALLY.

SIR E. BLACKLAND PLEDGES HIS PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION.

HERE IS A CHANCE, SIR, FOR YOU, OR FOR YOU, MADAM.

I believe the technical phrase for this was "A slogan." Anyway, that is the way the type-setters of every nation screamed it out, each in his own tongue, and the peoples who could read did so. Then they groped for ideas. But none came that were of any material use. Even the League of Nations, whose letter-boxes were cluttered up with a million schemes for eliminating the blue caterpillars, and who doubled the staff in honour of the occasion, and who were still full of fine young enthusiasm, had to own that no plan that was submitted for staying the plague had the least practical value. It is said the occasion always produces the inventor. The Great War did not: the

caterpillar invasion did not-till Sir E. Blackland chose to come out into the open.

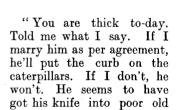
"Uncle Peter," said Patricia, as we were coming down off the hill with one and a half couple of lean, half-starved rabbits as a total day's bag for two guns and Bitters, "what do you think of Ernest's caterpillar cure?"

"Not knowing what it is, my dear, can't say. Why do you ask?""

"Do you think he's likely to bring it off?",

I'd half a mind to say I hadn't the faintest theory on the subject; but then I caught sight of the miserable drawn face of her, poor child, and tried to ease things down a bit.— "He brought off that beri-beri stunt, when everybody else had muffed it. That, I suppose, is something to go on for previous form. But I know nothing of his more recent running.

"He says he's got it all polished up and ready. But he'll only bring it into use if I promise to marry him."



" It was a deuce of a

job to decide upon, and I'd only Bitters to call into consultation.'

Dick most horribly."

"We've both got more liking for Dick, my dear," said I helpfully, "than for some people. And so?"

She sighed. "I don't see any way

out of it. Do you?" I didn't, and as Bitters was filling in time, for want of something better to do,

by demonstrating against an obvious fieldmouse's residence, I attended to her for the sin of frivolity by way of changing the conversation. "I don't know," said I, "what our household's going to live on if the game disappears off the countryside at the present rate. Not a bird we've even seen to shoot at. The village has simply

"But—er—I thought—er—"

"I'm sure you did. So does everybody else. And I'm only telling you in the strictest. I said to Ernest yesterday that as our tastes seemed to run in different directions, I thought we'd better do the same, and what about it? Well, Uncle Peter, he told me."

"Told you what?"

turned into one solid gang of poachers. Evans may be a good beer-tank, but he's as much good as a bobby as a tatie-bogle would be."

"Rotter!" said my adopted niece, though whether she meant me or P.C. Evans I couldn't be sure. But that night after dinner I had serious thoughts of cabling Dick to come home at once. Since my own boy went out in the War, I've got to care for Dick more than for anybody else I know—except perhaps Patricia. And it looked to me that this was Dick's business.

It was a deuce of a job to decide upon, and I'd only Bitters to call into consultation. She knew every point of it, and lay there and smelt quietly on my study hearthrug, and stared up at me with her warty old nose stretched out on her front toes. Bless her.

But when I thought of those hard blue eyes, and that lean face with its thatch of lint-coloured hair, I gave in. Ernest Blackland would cheerfully let the world die sooner than see another fellow marry his girl—especially one who had done well in the War, which he had missed. The matter of my liking or distaste for his methods would affect him as much as a spot of cigarette-ash falling on his coat-sleeve.

Patricia drove off in her car early next morning without troubling to say good-bye to me. She left a footling message with my man which he said sounded like something about "taking a plunge," but she was racing her engine to warm it up for the start, and he couldn't hear very clearly. As he lost one ear-drum at Jutland, that was understandable. I didn't cable Dick, and possibly saved the world from extinction by my abstinence. At least, so I've gathered since.

A marked copy of the Morning Post, formally announcing the date of the marriage of Sir Ernest Blackland, K.B.E., F.R.S., D.Sc., son of, etc., to Patricia, only daughter of the late, and so on, arrived two days later. On it, in Patricia's generous fist, was inscribed the request: "Friends, please accept this, the only intimation." I rolled it into a ball and hurled it at Bitters' head. She bit me affectionately but firmly on the ankle, and retired to slumber with the satisfied grunt of one whose work is well done. I sat back in my chair, and for ten minutes, with an old Coaster's fluency, cursed everything.

The wedding which had been arranged . . . took place . . . quietly . . .

I sent, of course, what I could. But it was regretted that . . . Peter . . . late Governor of our West African colony of . . . owing to an attack of malaria, was not amongst those also present. A man at the Travellers' told me Dick's rope of pearls must have run him in for £3,500 at the very least.

Blackland came into the open with a

vengeance after the wedding.

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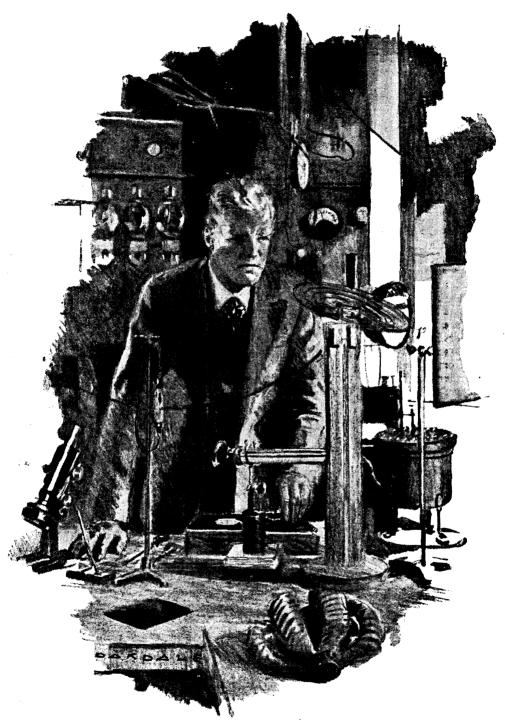
His letter to the Daily Telephone began with a contemptuous reference to the League of Nations and its unbroken record of inefficiency. In the matter of eliminating Choerocampa Universitas performance was the only thing that counted. The League had tried noisily: it had done, as usual, nothing. So he was going to take a hand himself. Like the rest of the world's surface, Wales and Poland were swarming with the pestilent caterpillars. He asked the residents in those quarters to report on what happened to-morrow.

The thing came off dramatically enough. Poland I don't know much about. Poles were enjoying one of their usual matches with the Ruvitanians or some other brand of undesirables at the moment, and hadn't much leisure for scientific observation. But gallant little Wales seemed to be invaded by one Pressman for every ten square yards of her surface. These reported that hawk caterpillars at varying times, within two hours, with varying flicks of their arrogant heads, gave up the ghost and lay down in varying attitudes of death. They all seemed to bring in the words truculent, or insolent, or arrogant, about the brutes. They all agreed on the intensity of the stench of crushed oranges that arose after the caterpillars died. They had all apparently searched for living survivors without finding one.

Conquering the Caterpillar was the general title of their pean.

"The load of horror was lifted," said the leader-writers. "Civilisation might continue to breathe." But—could it?

Hard upon the heels of these reports came another letter from E. Blackland to the Daily Telephone. Sir, it said, "The efficiency of my apparatus for the destruction of C. Universitas has now been proved. Yesterday I was married, and for the next three weeks I shall be away on my honeymoon. During that period the world can decide, if it feels so disposed, what royalty or rent it would be prepared to pay me for the use of my discovery."



"Killed all the caterpillars in Wales and Poland by etheric waves sent out by directional wireless."

The world, next morning, scratched its head very thoughtfully when it read that letter. Even the *Daily Telephone* used an unaccustomed diplomatic touch with the leader which contained its comments. And in the meanwhile the unknown Sir Ernest, with his new Lady Blackland, by the simple expedient of registering as K. & P. Arkholme, spent an entirely unrecognised vacation at an hotel in Scarborough.

The world, putting itself in Sir Ernest's shoes, proceeded to make a valuation of itself for ransom purposes. One looks back to that three weeks now as rather unedifying. Ninety-nine per cent of the estimates were made in cash. They ranged from millions sterling to millions to the power of n. The odd one per cent suggested that Sir Ernest should take his price in cash cum titles. They offered him Dukedoms and Principalities. Nobody mistook him for a philanthropist who would do the job for nothing.

Yet that, in effect, was what he turned out to be. "I am tolerably well off," he wrote at the end of that three weeks. "I ask for no reward for my discovery either in cash or honours. It is at the service of my fellow-men, so long as they behave themselves. But I am going to set myself up as a judge of behaviour, and to those that fall below my standard there will be no relief until they conform to it. They may still then continue to stew in their own caterpillar swarms.

"I killed the sample caterpillars in Wales and Poland by etheric waves of my own invention, sent out by directional wireless. This week I will clear the pests from Chili and Peru, from Great Britain and the United States. Other desirable countries will follow in due rotation. Russia and Mexico may continue to be eaten up till they have purged themselves of their human nuisances. And I can always take away the protection from any country that misbehaves, and let it have another dose of the caterpillar scourge. Remember that. "E. Blackland."

From then on all was jubilation amongst the decent peoples of the earth, and anxiety to reform amongst the indecent. But by degrees, in Great Britain, at any rate, it began to dawn upon the population that a dictator had established himself at their head. It is true he was quite a beneficent personage, but he was a dictator none the less. And he held the whip-hand. Sir

Ernest exterminated *C. Universitas* where and when he so chose. But the secret of his process remained in his own head. He never published it. He did not even leave indication as to its nature in either of his laboratories—as various scientific burglars discovered to their cost. All uninvited invaders to those workshops emerged paralysed—or did not emerge at all. Sir Ernest, when questioned, said he could not understand the matter. But there it was all the same; paralysis for all burglars, without exception.

The Finger of the Dictator began soon to

show itself through the Press.

"To assist reconstruction after the caterpillar pestilence, Sir Ernest Blackland has recommended a cut of £100,000,000 in this year's Government expenditure."

"Sir Ernest Blackland has sent for the

Prime Minister."

"The Prime Minister has undertaken to carry out the reductions Sir Ernest demands."

That is the way the paragraphs ran. The country which had been ruled for years by vote-catching politicians breathed a sigh of relief at finding a man at its head who did not care two pins for any voter whatever, and who showed he had an enormous store of common sense. It backed him whole-heartedly even when he insisted on such ticklish reforms as universal vaccination, by force if necessary, and compulsory manners for members of parliament and mayors.

He asked, as I say, for no honours and no pay; he lived in quiet style; he was held up as the public example of a great man who adored his wife and said he got all

his inspiration from her.

And Patricia played the game. She was a good wife to him: there is no question about that. But I happened to be in their house on one of those days when "Ernest had sent for the Prime Minister," and the little great lady's tired mechanical smile with the crow's-feet on either side of it made me feel rather sick. Dick would have ached to see the two gashes where those adorable dimples had once done their merry work. But then Dick carries on with keeping out of the way. Well, I suppose Patricia is wife of the biggest man in the world to-day. She may not like her job. But she fills it.

My elderly eye gets rather damp when she writes to me. She always brings in the word rooks to please me, when she's meaning

crows all the time.

THE PAINTED PEBBLES

ILLUSTRATED BY IOHN CAMPBELL

> Pigeon mourned. "Poor old Piers. He used to be the most cautious and rational of men. This-this is quite wild."

"Like proving we're the lost ten tribes, or everything's a pyramid. Yes. Fellows do get these little ideas. Quite clever fel-

lows. A sad world."

"I wish you would look at it, Fortune. He expects me to publish it in the next journal. It's a most distressing situation. He would be the laughing-stock of Europe."

Mr. Fortune sighed and took the typescript and turned the pages. "Oh my aunt!" he said softly. "Like a dream, isn't it?" He looked at Pigeon. "When did he begin to go off?"

"I must own I've thought his work has been getting rather fanciful for some time."

"Any reason? You said something about a charmin' wife. These little things can be disturbing."

Pigeon was shocked. "Mrs. Piers is the most delightful person. They have been married twenty years. Their daughter is almost grown up."

"And the deterioration is recent?"

"You know how well he handled that little controversy with Bonham about the carved tusk in that Cotswold cave. It's only in the last two years I have thought him weaker. In point of fact it is since he had his present secretary Janverin. It may be prejudice, but I cannot bring myself to like that fellow."

"Who is Mr. Janverin?"

"Quite a youth still. He's not a university man. He had done some trivial popular work on ancient art when Piers took him up. Still writes, I believe," said Pigeon with disgust.

"Yes. Yes. There are possibilities," Mr. Fortune murmured. "By the way, what about the evidence for the learned cave men? Have you seen the pebbles

and the mammoths?"

T T was the summer term in Oxford. Mr. Fortune renewed his youth in an atmosphere of hayfields and cider cup: gave the college gardener new light upon delphiniums and the bursar a short course of claret. His university had appointed him an examiner in pathology.

were extracted to the second of the second o

Pigeon asked him to dinner. You may have read Pigeon on the soul. He is also an authority on Spanish cookery and prehistoric man. To Mr. Fortune naturally a

kindred spirit.

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The port and the snuff had gone round in St. Luke's common room. They escaped to Pigeon's pleasant rooms over the garden and talked of old summer terms. "I forget-did you ever know Piers-James Piers?" said Pigeon.

"No. No. When young I threw crackers into his bedroom. But without prejudice."

"I was glad you were up just now," Pigeon droned. "He's quite good, of

"Oh, Lord, yes," said Mr. Fortune and

waited, knowing his Pigeon.

"Yes, he's done some of the best work. You never met his wife. Charming woman. He lives out on the Berkshire downs now. Poor old Piers!"

"You think so?" Mr. Fortune smiled.

"He has just written a most remarkable paper. The argument is that the alphabet was in use in the old Stone Age." Pigeon spoke with deep grief.

"Do you mind?" said Mr. Fortune.

"He claims to have found in a cave in the chalk among bones of mammoths and flint implements pebbles painted with the letters of an Egyptian alphabet." Pigeon opened a drawer and took out a heavy mass of typescript. "Here is his paper."
Mr. Fortune said "Help!" and waved

it away. "No, Pigeon. I've been reading

far too much fiction lately."

"It is an extraordinary production,"

"He sent me the pebbles and some fragments of bone." Pigeon produced a box in

which they lay on cotton-wool.

Mr. Fortune turned over the bones. "Yes. Quite old. It could be mammoth ivory." He frowned at the pebbles. They were water-worn, smooth and grey, painted in red with strange signs, like an ox's head, an eye, a snake. "This is a known script, isn't it?"

"Dear me, yes. There's a close resemblance to the Sinai inscription. Almost exact. Think of it! That peculiar alphabet used in England in the age of mammoths, ten thousand years before they were using it in Sinai. It would be stupendous."

"Yes. Yes." Mr. Fortune was fingering the pebbles. "But this paint isn't ten thousand years old. Or one. This is a modern colour. Venetian red. Different constitution from the red ochre the cave men used."

"You're very acute." Pigeon looked at him with doleful admiration. "Dear me,

it is most unpleasant."

"Very interesting case," said Mr. Fortune cheerfully. "Two possible theories. Either Mr. Piers has faked his pebbles to stupefy the learned world, or somebody else has faked them to please Mr. Piers. And one crushin' difficulty. The fellow who knew enough to work this subtle fake knew enough to use the right colour. Quite easy to get red ochre. Why didn't he? I ask you."

"I am so glad you're in Oxford, Fortune,"

said Pigeon.

"Yes. There are points. It might be something in my line."

"My dear Fortune! You don't suggest

crime ? "

"What is crime?" Mr. Fortune murmured.

A fluttered Pigeon sat down and wrote to Piers that Mr. Reginald Fortune was most interested in his remarkable discoveries and anxious to talk them over. The reply was a warm invitation for Mr. Fortune to spend the week-end at Beding.

On Saturday morning Mr. Fortune's car climbed from the river into the chalk hills and discovered Beding House. It stands in a hollow of the down, a house of oriels and steep gables of mellow grey stone. An

old house of secrets.

Mr. Fortune stood in the porch and his chauffeur began to watch him with kindly interest. The door was slow to open. Mr. Fortune rang again. From the garden a girl came in a hurry, a buxom creature with

a mop of red hair. She should have been pretty, but her eyes were swollen and pink. She saw Mr. Fortune and did not like him.

The door opened at last. An old butler, also out of breath, stared at Mr. Fortune as if he were a horrid sight.

"My name's Fortune. Mr. Reginald For-

tune."

"Mr. Piers is not at home, sir."

"Really? He wrote to ask me to come here to-day."

"Indeed, sir?" The butler compressed his lips. "The secretary, perhaps? Would you wish to see Mr. Janverin?"

"Yes. Yes. It might be as well."

And Mr. Janverin came. A little man, whose clothes and whose hair flapped loose, who had an inch of whisker and a toreador's hat, he arrived on a motor bicycle. The girl caught at him as he got off. "Janny! Where have you been?" He blinked at Mr. Fortune, he mumbled that he had been just round. "Have you heard anything?"

"No, of course not." He put her aside and she shook and bit her lip. "Did you want to see Mr. Piers, sir?" Once more Reggie announced that his name was Fortune. This time it produced an effect. Janverin blinked fast. "Mr. Fortune?" he repeated. "I—I'm afraid——" He turned to the butler.

o me buner.

"Mr. Piers has not returned," said the butler haughtily.

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Fortune. Mr. Piers will be most distressed. Do come in."

A big panelled hall, a glimpse of a noble staircase and Janverin had him shut in the library. "I am Mr. Piers' secretary, you know. My name's Janverin. Perhaps you've heard of me?"

"Oh yes. Yes." Mr. Fortune smiled.
"Pigeon was saying—you know Pigeon of

St. Luke's?"

Janverin was a moment before he said: "Of course, yes. Do sit down, Mr. Fortune. Cigarette? No? Would you care for a drink? No?" He gave himself a long one.

"Pigeon was talking of these remarkable discoveries."

Janverin nodded. "Of course. Wonderful, aren't they?" He laughed nervously. "Rather over my head, don't you know? My line's art. You're an expert, of course."

"Oh, Lord no," said Mr. Fortune. "Just an amateur. But Pigeon said Mr. Piers wouldn't mind showing me——" He looked vaguely round the room. "You know, I wonder if I'm giving a lot of trouble?"

"Not in the least, not at all, Mr. Fortune. Of course, Mr. Piers was delighted to hear you could spare him a day or two. He'll be quite upset he wasn't here when you came. He's a little absent sometimes. And one or two things cropped up. I'm sure you won't mind."

"My dear chap! But I mean to sayif anything had happened that made me inconvenient, you'd tell me, wouldn't

vou?"

"Oh no. You mustn't think that, sir. Not at all." Janverin started up.

just see if Mr. Piers is back."

At the shut door through which he had departed Reggie Fortune gazed with dreamy eyes. There was, even as Pigeon had said, a certain difficulty in liking Janverin.

But Mr. Janverin's hearty welcome offered other matter for thought. It did not account for the conspicuous absence of the lady of the house. Where was that charming woman? The butler should have referred to her. The affable Janverin should have produced her. It was to be supposed she also was out. But why not say so? Mr. Fortune inclined to think that he had come to Beding House a little late.

"I wonder," he murmured, and banished prejudice to ask himself why he did not like

Janverin.

He will tell you that he never believes in faces, and even less in what people think about other people. He eliminated Pigeon's opinion of Janverin and the whiskers and the blinking eyes. But there was something—it might be just a bad manner. No. He felt the man not wholly normal.

Reggie moved uneasily, rose from his chair and wandered about the room. Not normal, no. The whole thing felt queer. What was wrong with the house? Jolly old room; he surveyed tables and presses three hundred years old, black oak panelling, Chinese rugs on the polished floor: beautifully kept too. The charming wife knew that part of her job. But there was something odd about the place. He heard a faint murmur of talking; the door opened.

"I put Mr. Fortune in here, sir. Yes. Here we are. I'm afraid he's been waiting rather a long time." Janverin smiled and blinked. "Mr. Piers, Mr. Fortune."

If poor old Piers was weakening it had not affected his physique. He was like the conventional John Bull. He carried his bulk vigorously. His colour was high. "Many apologies," he said. "I was suddenly called away this morning. How are

How are you? Very good of you you? to spare time to look at my work."

"So good of you to ask me," Mr. Fortune murmured. "I only hope I'm not in the wav."

Piers looked fiercely at Janverin. "My dear sir, I'm delighted to see you," he cried. "You're giving us a long week-end, aren't you? You're just the man I want. A man of science. A critical mind." The first ruch of his words fainted away. He jabbed at the bell. "You must forgive me, Mr. Fortune. My wife happens to be away. I don't know-" The large butler came in. Is the blue room ready?"

"The blue room, sir?" The butler stared at Reggie. "Yes, sir."

"Let me show you, Mr. Fortune." Piers

marched out.

And as they went up a noble Elizabethan staircase: "I'm so sorry I'm not to meet Mrs. Piers," said Reggie.

Piers stopped. "Yes. Very unfortunate. She's away just now. Quite unexpected. Had to go suddenly. She-she'll be very sorry. Yes." He went on two steps at a

The room smelt of lavender. It was hung with tapestry of Venus on a rosy cloud in blue sky. The great four-poster had curtains of blue. But the bed was not made. There was no water.

Reggie sat down on the bed and gazed at the barren splendours. "Oh, Peter!" he moaned. "What have they been up to?"

His chauffeur came in with his suit-case and turned upon him a sympathetic and humorous eye. "They let me in, sir. At last. Which I was wondering. Not what I'd call friendly about it neither. Kind of nervy. And the 'ouse ain't exactly a 'ome from 'ome. Built all cock-eye."

"Be genial, Sam," Mr. Fortune exhorted

him. "Be affable."

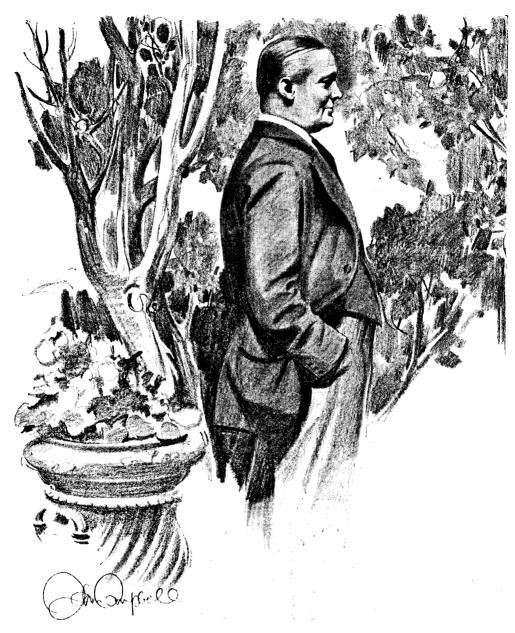
"Very good, sir. Are we here on busi-

"That is indicated," said Mr. Fortune sadly.

"There's a lady's maid with a good old poker face about."

Mr. Fortune gazed at him. Mr. Fortune sent him to find water and, being cleansed, descended with wistful eyes seeking lunch.

It might have been worse. There was The claret could be drunk without anxiety. Mr. Fortune making amiable small talk found support. Janverin could babble about anything. Piers would come in with a rush, fade away to incoherence and silence



and come again. Only the red-haired girl ("my daughter Alice, Mr. Fortune") had nothing to say. When she was not looking at her plate she was looking out of the window. She escaped at the first decent moment.

Piers also was in a hurry to get up. If Mr. Fortune would excuse him for half an hour—some urgent letters to write—catch the post-perhaps Mr. Fortune could amuse himself in the library.

Mr. Fortune went into the garden. He did not like it: holding a simple creed that gardens should grow flowers. The garden of Beding grew many things: sundials, statues, stone seats, yew hedges cut into birds, trees trained to make green tunnels for walking in; but its flowers were few and pathetic, not so much a garden (Mr. Fortune sighed) as a maze. And he came out of one of these pleached walks to find



Mr. Fortune came out of one of these pleached walks to find himself back by the house again, which startled him, and startled still more the red-haired girl."

himself back by the house again, which startled him, and startled still more the red-haired girl.

She was looking at some filmy stuff, a green chiffon scarf. She crushed it in her hands and drew away, watching him with

horrified eyes.

"Well, well," said Reggie. "This is very surprisin'! I was going away, and I seem to have come back. This is a wonderful garden, Miss Piers."

" Is it? Why?"

"Don't you ever lose people in it?" Reggie smiled.

"No, we don't," she flushed: she looked fury at him. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I was lost. That's very unusual and disconcertin'."

"You shouldn't have come."

She hurried away to the house.

Mr. Fortune contemplated the place where he stood, a little paved place with a hedge (of course) between it and the house, but the only part of the garden he could find which looked out over free air. It had a stone seat in the hedge and two bushes of

bay in oak tubs.

"Pleasin' spot for meditation," Mr. Fortune murmured, and sinking on the stone bench meditated thus: "She found the green scarf here; she knew it; she was much affected. First obvious assumption: the scarf was her absent mother's. But why was she so affected? Nothing really horrid in mother dropping her scarf. Second assumption: mother, though absent, dropped it recently. It's an evening dress sort of scarf. Say mother dropped it last night. When did mother go? Between last night and this morning? Very sudden of mother. Piers said that. He was probably telling the truth. It was sudden or they wouldn't be so muddled. But why did mother go? And finally, where did mother go?" He wriggled as he sat, he turned to look into the green shadows of the garden and his round face had the unhappiness of a bewildered child's. "I wonder." He looked away where hedges and trees let him see a wide prospect over the downs. "She came here last night—and then?" He shivered.

His cigar-case came out. While still he contemplated the blue distance his hands chose a cigar and lit it. He turned to throw the match tidily into the hedge and saw a scrap of paper, white paper crushed and crumpled with writing on it in pencil: queer, jerky, irregular writing; legible enough; not uneducated; not a child's;

such as a hand might write in sickness or if it were injured; but writing of no individuality. What was written was queer stuff too.

"Paida temen nosphissamenen thala-

monte posinte."

Reggie pondered over it. "Oh, Peter!" he murmured. "Greek. Well, well." He lay back and gazed at the blue heaven. "The charmin' woman comes out here by night—and leaves her scarf behind—and a document of Greek written in English letters by some one sufferin' from spasms. Yes. We have a long way to go. Quite a long way. Several unknown elements." He studied the writing again. "' 'Paida temen nosphissamenen'-the metre of the late Homer, I think—'thalamonte posinte.' my aunt! The bridal chamber and the husband. Not a nice case, Mr. Piers. What in wonder is that other word? Yes, the library is required, as Mr. Piers kindly said."

There a lexicon revealed to him that nosphissamenen meant "forsaking" and gave him a reference to the Odyssey. He found the line. Helen was telling how she ran away with Paris, "Forsaking my daughter and my bridal chamber and my husband."

"Yes, and the charming woman has gone; yes, very lucid," Mr. Fortune murmured. "Leavin' a statement of her case in Homeric Greek written as English—with jerks. I take it that's very seldom done when eloping. Yes. Some unknown element quite active."

At this point in the investigation Janverin came in. Reggie slid the document into his pocket but remained absorbed in Homer. "Mr. Piers has just finished, sir, if you'd come to the study."

"Oh, ah," Reggie murmured. "Yes. Quite." He went on reading for a minute

and sighed and shut the book.

"Homer!" Janverin was surprised. "I pass. I'm afraid I'm not what you'd call educated."

"Nor am I," said Reggie sadly.

"I expect you begin where I leave off. Mr. Piers wanted me to grind at the classics. I haven't the head for it. I can find my way about in Latin, but I shied at Greek." Reggie murmured civil interest. "Have you been reading all the time, sir? You should have had a look at the garden."

"I did. Just a stroll. Wonderful place."
"It's a dream, isn't it? Did you find the Queen's throne? Where you come out of the pleached walk and the view breaks on you?"

"Yes. Yes. I suppose I did." Reggie looked at him with large solemn eyes.

"Chilly spot."

"Chilly!" Janverin stared. "I never noticed that." He blinked. "No. I mean it's like this. In the garden it's the sort of confused pattern you're in in dreams and then you suddenly see something clear. Don't you know that feeling, sir?"

"I wonder," Reggie murmured.

"Oh, well," Janverin giggled. "It's just fancy." He went on to the study. And Reggie followed in body but not in mind. He found Mr. Janverin interesting.

Piers was at his desk with a little heap of letters. "Ah, here you are. That's all, Janverin. Get them down to the post.

Now, Mr. Fortune!"

Reggie was set down by a big table in the window and Piers began to lecture. Some months ago woodmen clearing an old copse had come upon holes going down deep into the chalk. Nothing strange in that. Dene holes, of course—whatever dene holes might be-hiding-places, or storage pits or mines for flint-dene holes quite common in chalk country. But obviously worth investigation. Bonham disagreed, of courseperhaps Mr. Fortune knew Price Bonham? —always ridiculously sceptical. But Piers did investigate, and discovered that the shafts led to a large chamber in the chalk. There was a passage from it choked up, which being opened led out through the hill-side. Piers dug into the floor of the chamber. It was dark earth with charred wood and ash in it, worked flints, picks of reindeer antlers, mammoth bones and, most wonderful, pebbles painted with the script of the Sinai inscription: an Egyptian alphabet.

Piers went to a cabinet, drew out a tray and laid it on the table, glowing triumph.

"There, Mr. Fortune."

Reggie bent over the exhibits. "Yes. Yes. Remarkable collection. Do you put a date to them?"

"I cannot identify them with any known culture. Superficially they seem to belong to different periods."

"Yes. I thought that," Reggie mur-

mured. "The flints would seem to be of a later time than the last Ice Age. But they are found in the same stratum as the reindeer antlers and the mammoth bones. And there is nothing below. Only a few inches of earth and we come down to virgin chalk."

"It's an antler all right," Reggie said,

handling a pick. "Do you think it's reindeer ? "

"Oh, undoubtedly. You mustn't forget the evidence of the mammoths. Clearly a culture of the Ice Age."

"Yes. The mammoths are very curious. I should have said the last of the mammoths had emigrated long before these flints were

"One would think so," Piers beamed. "Yet the flints are undoubtedly man's

work, Mr. Fortune."

"Oh yes. They're genuine all right."

"And now consider the pebbles, sir," Piers cried. "You see," he demonstrated: "the square sign was a house or B, the three strokes a hand or I, the curl an ox-goad or L, the diamond a mouth or P, and so on, precisely as in the primitive alphabet akin to Egyptian hieroglyphics found in Sinai." He compared his pebbles with a printed copy of it. "You observe? The resemblance is exact."

"Yes. As you say," Reggie murmured. "Exact." He contemplated Mr. Piers with

mild curiosity.

"So we are forced to the conclusion—the epoch-making conclusion—that an Egyptian alphabet was in use in England in the last Ice Age."

"Yes. Yes. Devastatin' idea," Reggie

murmured.

"That is to say, the Egyptian civilisation was here in England ten thousand years before it was developed in Egypt."

"Well, well!" said Reggie, watching the

face of poor old Piers flush and shine.

"Let me put it more clearly." Piers produced a copy of his paper and fear came into Reggie's round eyes. "I'll just give you an outline of my theory." He began to read; he read on and on. The sunshine went out of the room and still he read.

Reggie became aware of silence. He sighed. He opened his eyes. "There, Mr. Fortune," Piers was saying, a little hoarse, but exultant. "There you have it in a nutshell." Reggie moaned gently. what would be your criticism?"

"Well, it's a little shatterin', you know. Quite a lot of people will think it's not quite

nice of you."

"I'm well aware of that," Piers chuckled. "Bonham doesn't like it at all. Of course, it destroys the whole fabric of orthodox archæology."

"Bonham's seen the evidence, has he?

What's he say about it?"

"Oh, very cautious, very cautious. He's

a born sceptic. Bonham admits they're remarkable discoveries, but he won't commit himself. But I want your opinion, Mr. Fortune."

"Well, you know, I should like to have a

look at this chamber in the chalk."

"I shall be delighted to show you everything. We'll go over to-morrow. But what do you think of the evidence here, Mr. Fortune?" He laid his hands on the pebbles, and his hands were shaking.

"You see, I'm only an amateur," Reggie said gently. "I don't feel sure. I should

like an expert opinion or two."

The exuberance of Piers dwindled away; as the stimulant of expounding his discoveries passed off he was again the nervous and uneasy man of the morning. "Not sure?" he repeated. "An expert opinion? Oh, you think so. What was the point you mentioned?"

"You're not in a hurry to publish any-

thing, are you?"

Poor old Piers stared at him. "Oh no. Not now, no. There's no hurry." He took up a pebble and looked at it drearily. "They are wonderful, aren't they?"

"Yes. Yes. Very odd. You know, I should have that paint analysed. Just to

protect yourself, Mr. Piers."

Piers dropped the pebble. "Protect myself? Oh yes, of course. Analyse the paint. Yes. Will you excuse me? I must see if Janverin has brought back any letters." He hurried out.

Reggie frowned at the tray of bones and stones. Not that they bothered him. His mind was quite placid about the fabric of orthodox archæology. The stupendous discovery was fitting neatly into the explanation which he had expected. Flintsgenuine work of the latest Stone Age; antlers—genuine too, but not from any reindeer's head, antlers of red deer; mammoth bones—property of real mammoths, but not from a chalk cave; painted pebbles—a modern fake. Quite clear. Poor old Piers had found a late Stone Age flint workshop, of the common type, and it had been salted with the mammoth bones and the pebbles to provide the evidence for his wonderful theory. But who did the salting?

A fellow who knew something; enough to get hold of mammoth bones; enough to copy the obscure Sinai script. But how could a fellow who knew as much as that expect his modern paint would be accepted?

After all, it was accepted—by poor old Piers. And that was the queerest part of the problem. Piers had been a good man once. What was the matter with poor old Piers? Why didn't he spot the paint? What if he did the salting himself? Mind weakening—a wild theory got hold of him—he faked the evidence to prove it. Quite possible. Such things had been. What about the mysterious Janverin? Pigeon said the deterioration of Piers set in after the advent of Janverin. Janverin might have planned the thing to get a hold over him. Janverin would be the sort of clever fellow to know enough for a crime and not quite enough to bring it off.

Reggie shook his head. "This isn't getting anywhere," he murmured. "Try it from the other end. What have they done with the charming woman? She went very sudden. Her daughter's frightened. Piers is frightened. Why did she go? The Greek, which Mr. Janverin doesn't know, suggests that she was going off with another man. I wonder. But who wrote that Greek? must have been written for Piers to read. Did she write it? Suppose she knows Greek, why in wonder should she write it in English letters? But why should anyone? What about Mr. Janverin who doesn't know Greek? If she was in his way, if he wanted to have Piers all to himself, he might play tricks to set poor old Piers against her. But this trick? How could he make Piers believe that a Greek line in English writing meant anything to worry about? Did Piers write it himself? Madder and madder yet. Is the old man off his head? And if he is, what's happened to his wife?" Reggie stared at the bones. "It all happened last night. Piers was out this morning. . . . I wonder. . . . That chamber in the chalk.

A bell clanged through the house. Reggie started up. The house was silent again but for soft footsteps in the hall. He opened the door. "That was the dinner bell, sir," said the large butler. "The first bell."

"Oh yes. Yes. Thanks," said Reggie. He turned back into the study and sat down again, a little pale, a little quick of breath. "This is futile," he rebuked himself. He looked about the room. Something unusual on a side table caught his eye. He came to it slowly. A flat piece of wood like a small palette on legs: a planchette. "Oh, my aunt!" he murmured. "Yes, quite so. Write it with jerks. So planchette wrote it, did she, Mr. Janverin? And you don't know Greek."

He went slowly up to his room. Sam was

there with all things in order. Sam looked at his pale face with sympathetic curiosity. "I done what you said, sir. I've been affable."

"Any results?"

"It's a rum house. They're hush, hush when you get 'em together. They'll talk separate. Except Mrs. Piers' maid. She's hostile all round. One of these stern old maids. She's got a special down on the butler. Like an angry hen with him. He funks her shocking. But they're all scared. The mistress 'as gone off very sudden. They 'ad a bit of a dinner last night. Two gentlemen, a Mr. Bonham and a Captain Drayton, old friends of the family. She was there, everything quite ordinary. It was some sort of a send-off for the captain. He's going back to his regiment in India. When the servants got up this morning Mrs. Piers wasn't about. They say she hadn't slept in 'er bed. Last time she was seen was when the butler took in coffee. Mr. Piers 'asn't said a word: only that the mistress has gone away. Looks to me she's gone off with the captain, sir."

"Is that how it looks to the servants?" "I couldn't rightly say," Sam considered. "They don't talk free. They got the wind

up so."
Yes. Yes. Queer house." Mr. Fortune was tying his tie. His hands stayed on it. He looked round from the mirror, listening. "Did the butler say anything about a séance, Sam?"

"Séance, sir? That's spooks, isn't it?" "Spirit messages. Writing with a plan-

chette. That sort of thing.

"Lor' no, sir. Not a word. 'E didn't 'int at it." Sam stared. "The only thing I kind of got at, 'e 'as no use for Mr. Janverin."

"Yes, I thought that," Reggie murmured, and went pensively down to dinner. The daughter did not appear. Piers made vague apologies. Alice was not quite herself; nothing, really nothing, if Mr. Fortune would excuse her; just lying down. It was

a dragging meal.

Reggie went early to bed. As he passed along the corridor he heard a faint murmuring sound: a girl crying. He found it hard to sleep. It was late; he was between sleeping and waking when some noise came sharp to his dull senses. He was on his feet within the minute. A shriek, it must have been a shriek. But the house was still. He opened his door. In the dark corridor someone stood with a candle—a woman in black,

oldish, prim. She glared at him, she tapped at a door and went in. For the instant the door was open he heard the red-haired girl's

He went back to bed, heard quiet footsteps, and listening for more fell asleep.

When Reggie said at breakfast that by the way he had told his man to have the car ready, both Piers and Janverin showed some surprise. Reggie reminded them of the chamber in the chalk; hoped anxiously Piers felt fit for the expedition. "Fit? Perfectly fit. Perfectly. But I was going to drive you out myself. Or Janverin will drive. He generally does."

"Oh yes." Reggie beamed on Janverin. "Well, I've told my chap now. That'll be better, won't it? We can talk things over

as we go."

So it was Sam and his big car that took them, but they did not talk much. Piers was deflated and gloomy. Janverin would not react to Reggie's most ingenious ques-Reggie felt no certainty what had frightened them. The daughter was not ill. He had it from Sam that her mother's maid had taken her up a jolly big breakfast, and in that prim woman he had a perfect confidence. But Piers had not met his polite inquiries about her health at all well. Neither Piers nor Janverin liked his rude choice of his own car. If there was something which he must not find in that chamber in the hill, they might have meant to get him there without Sam.

The car was stopped under the steep scarp of a down dotted with juniper bushes, where a heap of fresh-turned chalk lay beneath a gap in the turf. Piers came heavily out of the car and flung back his big shoulders. "Now, Mr. Fortune! We'll show you everything. The whole thing." He went up the hill in swinging strides.

"This is the stuff we cleared out of the blocked gallery. But I think you'll agree

the gallery is old."

"If you'll show me the way," said Mr. Fortune politely, and ushered Piers and Janverin into the hill-side.

"Now, mind your head," Piers' voice boomed out of the dark.

Reggie went delicately in and set the beam of an electric torch on them. Piers made a peevish exclamation. Janyerin giggled nervously. "You won't really want that, sir.

You'll find you can see all right."

"Don't mind me," said Reggie, and kept them in the beam. But Janverin was justified. After a few yards the gallery was not dark. Faint light spread into it from a shaft overhead. Reggie stooped and turned his torch on the sides and roof. The gallery was not new by many a year, by many a century. He made haste after them.

They stood together in the chamber of their discoveries, a place like a big beehive cut out of the chalk. From the top of the dome a shaft went up to the daylight. sides were dark and smooth, the floor raw

white.

"I told you, didn't I?" said Piers. floor we found has all been removed. dug down to the hard chalk. Every scrap of earth was taken up to the wood above. Otherwise the place is just as we found it. Now, sir, what do you say?"

"Oh, it's old work, of course; quite old. Anything in those other galleries?" He pointed to two holes in the sides.

"We found nothing. They don't extend I've not done any digging in them."

Reggie turned his torch upon one and the other, went in, tried the chalk with his stick. And behind him he heard again Janverin's nervous laugh. But he found nothing, and everywhere the chalk was hard. He came back to look round the chamber again. "Well, well," he murmured. "And that's that."

Piers made a noise in his throat. "But what do you think of it, Mr. Fortune? I'm most anxious to have your opinion, you know. Be quite frank with me, please.

"Oh, I should say they were after flints," id Reggie brightly. "Mining for 'em. said Reggie brightly. And this place was where they worked them

"You're quite satisfied it's really of the

Stone Age?"

"Oh, Lord, yes. Genuine antique."

"I'm so glad to hear you say so. I was really afraid—you're so cautious, Mr. Fortune.'

Reggie smiled. "Yes. Yes. My weakness, sir. One gets to be very careful at my job. What about the earth you dug out? Upstairs, isn't it? We might have a look at that."

Piers took the suggestion eagerly. They came out to the side of the down again and climbed to the copse-or what was once a copse, for all the undergrowth had been cleared and most of the trees, and it was a sunny expanse of foxgloves and ragged robin. There by the head of the shaft, under a woodman's shed, was a mound of black earth. Reggie turned it with his stick. "Yes, largely burnt stuff; wood, ash and

refuse. I suppose you've been through it with a small tooth-comb. Did you do the excavation yourself, sir?"

"Oh, it was done with the utmost care. 4 was always present. I or Janverin.

We've both been over it."

see. Yes." Reggie contemplated Janverin dreamily. "Yes. What exactly was it that put you on to the place?"

"But surely I told you! The men clearing the copse found the head of this shaft."

'Did it surprise them ?" Reggie smiled. "I shouldn't have thought the local woodman lived in ignorance there was a shaft or two in the copse. Country folks generally know every inch of their ground."

Janverin giggled. Piers looked at him. Piers was embarrassed. "Perhaps they did. That's a good point. But that's how it was talked about really. You'll think me very foolish, I suppose, Mr. Fortune. It was actually a planchette that made me think of it. Planchette writing, you know. I suppose you'll hardly believe me, but I have had the most remarkable information from planchette. Janverin has an amazing gift."

"Is that so?" Reggie gazed at Janverin,

who blinked fast.

"Oh, I say, sir," he giggled. "It isn't anything about me, you know. The thing will write for anybody."

"My dear boy, we never could get results but from you. You'll laugh at me, Mr. Fortune——"

"Oh no, no. It's most interesting. And what did planchette write for Mr. Janverin?"

"We've had some of the strangest things

"Things I couldn't possibly know, you know," said Janverin hastily.

"Really?" Reggie murmured.

"I don't know how it happens myself, you see. I've always been like that. thing will write yards, some of it nonsense, some of it stuff I know about, some of it means nothing to me, but other people understand. Isn't it so, sir?" He turned to Piers.

"Indeed it is. Sometimes quite-yes."

Piers was incoherent.

"And your planchette writing said, 'Come and dig here '?" Reggie considered Janverin pensively.

"Well, it kept on talking about the place, you know, and Mr. Piers thought-

"Yes. I should myself. You must give me a séance, Mr. Janverin."

There was a moment of silence. Piers cried out: "Yes, Janverin. We must certainly try it again. Yes. I want to try it again. Come, come now. Let's be getting back. I want—I wonder——" He lapsed again to incoherence. He strode off to the car.

Reggie did not try to talk on the way back. He was sunk in meditation. Nobody talked. Piers fidgeted. Piers jumped out as soon as the car was at the house and ran She was at pains to look after her father at lunch, and he enjoyed it pathetically. She was gracious to Mr. Fortune. She chattered. But he thought that she was at strain.

They were sitting in the garden after lunch when a car drove to the house. Piers started up. Between the hedges a plump man appeared smiling. "Oh. Hullo, Bon-



"So in that dim twilight they sat, planchette on a little pile of sheets of paper, Janverin's long fingers on planchette, and Reggie watching them. There was no sound in the room but Piers' husky breathing. It grew slower as he fell asleep."

indoors. He was heard asking eagerly if anybody had called.

The red-haired girl came from the garden. "Good morning, Miss Piers." Reggie stood in her way. "I needn't ask if you're better." Her pretty face had recovered a clear pallor. Her eyes were gentle and happy. "Splendid."

She flushed. "Thank you. I'm perfectly all right." She went in calling "Father!" He heard them kiss.

ham!" Piers said gloomily. "How are you?"

"Good day. Good day," Bonham smiled. "My dear fellow, are you all right?" He looked keenly at Piers. "How is he, Alice?"

"How nice of you to come," said Alice.
"Do you know Mr. Fortune—Mr. Bonham?"

"I've heard of Mr. Fortune." Bonham shook hands. "Are you investigating the great discoveries, sir?"

"Oh no. No. I know some of my limitations. I sit at the feet of you experts."

"You've come to the right man," said Bonham heartily. "I'm a child in these things beside Piers." He looked round. I hope Mrs. Piers is well?"

"Oh yes, thanks. Yes, perfectly all right," said Piers in a hurry. "My wife was suddenly called away the other day."

"Oh, really! Sorry to miss her." Bon-

ham did not conceal surprise.

"We've been showing Mr. Fortune the excavations," said Janverin quickly. Bonham said that was very interesting, and they talked about it for some time, and Reggie said nothing in many words. So did Bonham. And Alice gave him tea, and he went away hoping, as he departed, that he would see Mrs. Piers soon.

"Now what about our séance, Mr. Janverin?" Reggie smiled. It was not well taken. Janverin said stiffly that one had to be in the mood, you know. Piers explained vaguely that the conditions had to be favourable—well considered—everything harmoni-

ous—perhaps later.

They had it after dinner. In the library they sat at a big table, and the only light came from a remote lamp. Piers explained that they found any strong light interfered with the freedom of planchette: probably occupied Janverin's mind with conscious thought. Janverin giggled. "I don't know. I just set myself not to think at all, don't you know. But I'd rather be in the dark. You must feel I don't know what I'm writing, or we shan't get anything. Are you satisfied, Mr. Fortune?"

"Oh yes, yes. You can't see to write." So in that dim twilight they sat, planchette on a little pile of sheets of paper, Janverin's long fingers on planchette, and Reggie watching them. There was no sound in the room but Piers' husky breathing. It grew slower as he fell asleep. Planchette's pencil moved, stopped, moved again, fast, then at long intervals. And Piers snored.

"I'm afraid I've not got anything," Janverin said wearily. "I don't feel in the mood. How about the light, Mr. Fortune?"

Reggie leant forward quickly and took the paper. "Yes, we might have a look," he said, and moved with it to the lamp.

"What is it? What is it?" Piers. started up. "Oh, let me see!" He ran to Reggie, and snatched the paper from him and pored over it. "No. No, it's nothing." He tumbled into a chair, breathing hard.

What was written was a mass of uncon-

nected words: "Chalk—not—nothing—look -dark-gone-not---" and so on and

"Sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Fortune," said Janverin.

"Perhaps I worry you. Does it only work with you and Mr. Piers?"

"No, sir, certainly not," Janverin cried.
"We've often had others. Mrs. Piers sometimes. And Mr. Bonham, too."

"Well, well," said Reggie. "Thanks very much. It's been most interesting.

night."

In the morning he spoke of going back to Oxford. To Alice, to Janverin, this caused no visible regret. But poor old Piers was pained. He hadn't thought so soon—he had so many things to discuss. Reggie was gentle with him. Reggie would come and see him again.

But the big car did not go to Oxford. Reggie took the seat beside his chauffeur. "And what did you make of it, Sam?" he smiled as they drove away.

"Fair give me the pip, sir. They're like as if they was 'aunted. I couldn't make

any sense of it."

"Not lucid, no," Reggie murmured. "Well, we'll go and call on Mr. Bonham."

Sam looked at him. "Mr. Bonham, sir? He's in the old bones line too, isn't he?" "Don't be superior, Sam."

Mr. Bonham inhabited a new house in the garden city style on the down above Beding village. "Mr. Fortune! This is a pleasant surprise. What can I do for you, sir?" Mr. Fortune wanted to have a talk about those discoveries of Piers'. Piers has consulted you. Very wise, I'm sure. Have you formed any opinion?" Mr. Fortune found it very difficult; he argued about dates and mammoths. I see you're adverse, Mr. Fortune. This would be very discouraging to Piers. Have you put it to him?"

"Yes. Yes. I shouldn't like him to do anything rash. Speakin' in confidence,

do you believe in this theory?"

Bonham shook his head. "I never commit myself to theories. But I must own I do find his facts very striking. Those pebbles, you know. It does seem to me eminently a case for full discussion. The whole case ought to be examined."

"Yes. I think so. But you wouldn't advise him to publish, would you?"

Bonham stared. "Surely, Mr. Fortune. It's a scientific duty. The whole facts ought to be made public at once. The discovery is of the first importance."

24 " Quite. Quite." Reggie nodded. "That's why I told him not to publish. 'I think he ought to test it first."

"I'm afraid Piers wouldn't take that

very well," Bonham said gravely.

"You never can tell," Reggie smiled. "He was quite nice to me. Good-bye. Thanks very much. I'm just off to Oxford.

Examining, you know."

But he did not go to Oxford. He directed the big car up to the downs and there stopped it. "This is where you get off, Sam. You stay here and watch if Bonham comes out and which way he goes. I'm going to find some lunch." He drove off. He came back in a short hour. "Nothing doing? Well, I've got a ham. Also beer. Give him time." They ate and drank; they watched through a drowsy afternoon. "He's having his tea, the blighter," Mr. Fortune mourned. "Aha! What have we here?" A car appeared at Bonham's gate. He was driving. He took the road to Beding House. Mr. Fortune smiled a slow, benign smile. "I thought he couldn't resist it. Come on, Sam."

The big car carried them away to another point on the high down which commanded Beding House. Bonham was seen going in. "More ham. More beer," said Mr. Fortune sadly. "What a life!"

"The beer's none so bad," said Sam.

They waited there till dusk, and still Bonham did not emerge. "Staying dinner, my Bonham?" Mr. Fortune smiled. "I thought so." He rose. "We will now endeavour to surprise my Bonham.

me down to the gate."

Wrapped in the dusk, Mr. Fortune walked discreetly through the garden and reached the front of the house. The dining-room windows were bright. He heard Bonham's important voice, the huskiness of Piers'. He moved to the side and went into the library through a window. The curtains were drawn, and it was dimly lit by one lamp remote on a little table by a screen. Behind the curtains he remained.

Voices grew louder. People came in-Piers, Janverin, Bonham. Janverin really didn't know if he was in the mood. They had no success last night. "Well, well, well, let us try it, let us try it," said Piers.

They sat down to the long table, Piers in his big chair at the end, Bonham by Janverin, watching his hands, as Mr. Fortune had watched the night before.

And Mr. Fortune behind the curtains watched both. . . .

The dim light flickered. He glanced at the lamp. The lamp had moved. . . .

The men at the long table noticed nothing. The pencil was writing, writing fast. It came off the paper to the table with a squeak. Janverin muttered. It wrote again, stopped. "That's all, I think. That's all," said Janverin wearily.

Mr. Fortune jumped at Bonham, and fell upon his neck. Down he went, chair and all, and Mr. Fortune on top of him. Confused and futile noises arose from Janverin.

Piers was braver. He came lumbering; he dragged at the man on top. It was Mr. Fortune. "Only me," said his cheerful voice. "Go easy. Only me. I said I'd come back, you know. And here I am." He was sitting on Bonham. "To introduce you to Mr. Bonham forgin' messages from planchette. Look." He flashed a torch on the supine Bonham; it showed a hand which grasped at a crumpled paper. gripped at the elbow. Bonham cried out, and his fingers relaxed. Mr. Fortune pounced on the paper. "Thanks very much," he laughed, and sprang to his feet. He turned his torch on the paper. "Look, Piers. Greek again," he said. "Not Homer this time. A little original prose. 'Aiguptious aei ex hou anthropon genos egeneto. Petrous ou pseudesthai. Mr. Bonham remarks that there have been Egyptians since the race of man began. And pebbles don't lie. Mr. Bonham's little way of telling you not to mind me."

Piers took the paper and read, muttering. Bonham scrambled to his feet. "This is an outrage," he spluttered. "You must be crazy, sir. I know nothing about the paper. It is what Janverin wrote with his planchette."

"But it isn't. Really it isn't," Janverin wailed. "Here are all my papers."

"Yes, quite so. He was going to put it with them when you went for the lamp. That's how the trick was worked."

Piers flung the paper down. "My God! Then the other—?" he muttered.

"Oh yes. The other was Bonham's contribution, too."

Piers stared at Bonham. "You damned scoundrel," he said slowly, and gave a cry and flung himself upon him.

"No. No. This won't do." Mr. Fortune bored in between them. "Let him But Piers be, sir. You have him beat."

was at the throat of his enemy.
"Jim!" a quiet voice said. "I'm here,

Jim."

Piers went limp. Piers stumbled back. looking round the dim-lit room. By the screen a woman stood, a slim, dark form. He made at her, his hands felt her. all right, dear," she said. The big man bent over her and hid his face.

Mr. Fortune turned to Bonham. "Now, go to the devil," he said softly: and Bonham went. Mr. Fortune went to the door. "And that's that." He sighed satisfaction. "Good night, Mrs. Piers. Good night,

"Mr. Fortune!" she cried. "You are not to go. You don't even know me."

"Oh, I think so.
"I've thought so some time."
"Bloom eried." Where in

Heaven's name have you been?"

She laughed. "I was behind the screen, dear."

"Yes. You moved the lamp." Mr. Fortune shook his head at her. "That made my flesh creep."

"Well, I was looking round the screen

and the lamp scorched my hair."

"But where have you been all the while?" Piers said.

She looked at him. She looked beyond him with her head on one side. "I'm sure Mr. Fortune knows. He knows every-

"Oh, you were in the house. You came to your daughter when she cried in the

"You're dreadful. My maid told me she believed you knew. I've been in the priest's hole, Jim. I couldn't go away. I was sure it was that dreadful Mr. Bonham did it all. I meant to watch and find out how he cheated you."

"The man must be a fiend," Piers cried. Ashamed and bewildered, he gazed pathetically at Mr. Fortune. "Why should he want to ruin me?"

"Not a nice man, our Bonham. I'm afraid he cherishes his little grudges. Didn't you show him up over some find in a Cotswold cave?"

"But, my dear sir, he was plainly

wrong-

"Quite. Quite. Have you noticed that soothes people? I haven't. He wanted to have his revenge. When, he found Janverin could write with planchette that gave him an idea. I suppose he suggested Janverin could write best in the dark, didn't he?"

"I really believe he did," Janverin cried. "Then he began to provide messages. He put you on to these old workings in the down, salted 'em with the mammoth bones and his faked pebbles, and fed you with planchette writing about the Egyptian theory. That went so well he was tempted to try another game. You were going to be ridiculous, you might as well be miserable too. So he started making mischief between you and Mrs. Piers. And at last you had that scrap of Homer."

"What did he write, Jim?"
"Oh, my dear!" Piers muttered. "I
was mad." He bent over her hand. "About Helen leaving her home and her child."

"And you came out and found me in the garden with Captain Drayton." She laughed. "My dear boy!"

"What did I say?" Piers groaned.
"It doesn't matter, Jim. Nothing matters now." Her hand caressed his head.

Mr. Fortune stood up. "Thank you for a very happy evening, Mr. Piers," he said.

"You! You thank me!"

"Yes. I think so," said Mr. Fortune.

NEXT MONTH—"THE WOMAN IN WOOD."

The Dean's wife was kissed by a runaway ruffian while placidly strolling in the Bishop's park. No wonder there were shocking speculations among the townspeople. After that anything might happen.

Something did happen. The Archdeacon's house was burgled.

Who but Mr. Fortune would have connected the two events with the remarkable statuette of a woman in wood which Aristide, the dealer, had priced at "one 'undred pound "-and been careful not to sell?

The statue now stands by Mr. Fortune's favourite chair and he is very fond of it. how he came by it and at what risk to life and limb makes a long and thrilling story which

no lover of good fiction should miss.

THE DISLOYAL SEX

By REX BRITTAIN

FRECKLED face, its disorderly hair atoned for by the severity of a stand-up celluloid collar, poked itself through the door at the call of the buzzer. Its owner wished to avoid exposing more of his person, as he was hurriedly stuffing the last instalment of *The Double Fisted Icicle* into a coat pocket already crammed.

"Tell Miss Merridew to come in and take a few notes," commanded Peter Busteed, who, with his staff of one and a half, composed "The Busteed Bureau of Scientific Publicity: Artists in Advertisement" (in the words of the soulless London Directory—

"advt. agts.").

Peter leant back expansively, perhaps impressively, in his swing chair, awaiting his typist, not long come to fill the place left by her predecessor, who had never, as Peter said, "caught the Busteed spirit." (Miss Node, it was believed, had developed dangerous and revolutionary ideas about the amount of free overtime that should be worked.) Peter intended, as he would have phrased it, to "imbue" the new-comer with "the Firm's ideal."

Perhaps this was necessary, for on the face of it there seemed to be nothing so very startling about the small room and its occupant. The windows looked out on the Strand. If you opened them you could not hear on the telephone, and smuts wafted in grimly to settle on everything. If you closed them, you stifled. This room and the cramped ante-chamber where the typist and the office boy dwelt had once been part of a larger suite, reached through a door in Mr. Busteed's office. Peter always kept an old overcoat hanging on that door to conceal the plugged keyhole, wishing callers to get, the impression that the furious clicking of typewriters beyond, which really came from the attorneys, Messrs. Leppards and Kites, was a manifestation of the exceeding busyness of the Busteed organisation.

As for Peter, he was a breezy sort of being with an air of universal good-fellowship and an unshakable confidence in himself which always impressed clients, at the outset. When in a good temper or asking a favour of his staff, he used a caressing tone; and the modulations of his pleasant voice were an improvement on the accent of any known public school. His greatest charm was a sudden, whimsical, compelling smile, which really drew the heart. Keener observers, like ourselves, might have thought the eyes a little protuberant, the glass-smooth black hair a little thin, the chutney-coloured suit with well-defined waist (and fawn spats) somewhat-noticeable. But it is to be feared that one, at least, of his staff for ever lost the power of judging him dispassionately after the first display of that sunny, winning smile!

"G'morning, Miss Merridew," he said curtly to the pleasantly attractive figure that entered, not sparing a glance for the fresh young face, to which an aureole of hair with a delicious bronze gleam and translucent eyes of moist violet gave a suggestion of unusual life and piquancy. For a moment she hesitated, and then sat down. Peter scowled momentarily—was it possible that the girl had expected him to get up and offer her a chair? Dismissing the idea as ludicrous, he turned to his notes.

"Wan'chu to take something on this new dentifrice account. Begin. Hmmm.

"" Why, you need Pearlo'—(underline 'you'—Miss Merridew)—er—' need Pearlo.'
"Every woman dreads the insidious ravages of dental decay, whether manifested in the deadly damage of caries, or in the more—"."

He went on in this way for several minutes, spelling out the numerous technical terms.

"By the way, Miss Merridew," he added with kindly indulgence when he had finished,
—"how does it strike you?" He had just thought that, after all, this girl was part of the public, so could help him to gauge the immensity of his advertisement's future effect.

Mary hesitated for a moment, wondering

how she could be honest and politic as well. She admired Mr. Busteed intensely, and she really thought it was very clever of anybody to be able to write advertisements at all. Herself she accounted as little better than a stupid goose. But her employer had been very explicit in the short and genial lecture given on her first day at the office, an informal talk which began—"You are one of us now"—and ended by stressing the desirability of furnishing any possible suggestion—"for the ultimate good of the organisation." He had hinted that such suggestions would be rewarded (but did not explain how).

"Well," she said, almost desperately. "I thought it very nice, Mr. Busteed. Of course it is. But all that about caries and pyorrhea, you know. Not quite plain, perhaps. Not to everybody. And the begin-

ning part——"

Peter was wounded.

"Perhaps you thought that you could do it better?" he remarked, with pained sar-casm.

"Oh no, Mr. Busteed. Only . . . I was interested. And at noon yesterday I did write a little bit out, the way I thought it might go, perhaps."

"Let's hear it, then," he jerked out.

Though highly nervous, she was convinced to her innermost that her own little effort was not so dreadfully bad. Funny he should seem so cross! She produced a blank leaf torn from a florin novel which she had covered with writing over the marble-topped luncheon table.

"' Where do your Teeth sleep at night?'" she began, trying to keep a little quaver

out of her voice.

At that instant there had been a loud double rap, and the door opened simultaneously without waiting for invitation, disclosing the portly, good-humoured person of Mr. Samuel G. Hymack himself, the prosperous and many-chinned proprietor of Pearlo.

"Good caption, that, Busteed," he said, nodding at the principal. He had evidently heard. "Your boy told me you weren't engaged, so I butted in." He turned on the girl his nice, fat smile of a successful man with daughters of much the same age.

"Don't let me interrupt your reading over, miss," said he, removing a plump and savoury cigar from his mouth as he spoke to her. "That heading was snappy. The

right touch. Proceed."

Peter had half risen from his chair, intend-

ing to explain matters, but the tone of Mr. Hymack—"The Guardian of a Million Molars"—as he had once termed himself, was assured and compelling. With one unhappy and apologetic glance at her employer, which the client failed to catch, Mary Merridew read on.

"Where do your Teeth sleep at night?
In a glass of water, or in the right place?
And if the latter, what of 1934? Will they still be there, or will you be doomed to the discomforts and dangers of expensive artificial substitutes?

NO—not if you use Pearlo,

The dentifrice that never lost a tooth for its owner.

An inch a day keeps the dentist away!"

Mary kept her face on the paper, and wished she could be erased, like a wrongly typed letter.

Before Peter could open his mouth and express regret for his typist's well-meant crudities, Hymack's rich tones filled the

oom.

"Great!" he exclaimed, delightedly. "Bully. That's the touch. Plenty of pep, but it doesn't screech at you. 'An inch a day '-I feel like sticking to that slogan. Better say-'keeps the forceps away' instead of 'dentist.' Most people don't have the dentist call on them; 'sides, it's stronger. Good, though. Have someone rough out a couple of strong illustrations to go with it. old English woodcut effect. One of the teeth in the glass; the other a nice girl's mouth, smiling in her sleep. Make the teeth in the glass look irregular and repulsive. A clumsy glass, thick. Make it a clean, plain lay-out in Caslon bold type, and splash it in all dailies. Best you've done for us yet, Busteed. Good day, miss!"

He departed in a rush, leaving an aroma of

expensive smoke.

Peter's smooth face was a study in emo-

"Well, really-" he exclaimed petu-

lantly.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Busteed," broke in Mary's rueful voice. "I didn't have time to think. I just had to go on. He somehow made me. Of course it's only his personal preference—" She stopped, confused."

"Clients are very difficult," commented Peter sententiously. "Mr. Hymack especially so. Ah, well, it might have been worse! By a happy accident you seem to have met his particular preference, as you say. Perhaps we can arrange in the circumstances to have you assist with the preparation of this particular matter; under my supervision, of course."

Controlling a natural resentment, he



"Mr. Samuel G. Hymack, the Guardian of a Million Molars, turned on the girl his nice, fat smile of a successful man with daughters of much the same age."

melted into that smile which flogged Mary's heart to sudden madness under her peaceable silken bosom, made her long to spoil and mother this man whom she inwardly divined (without ever acknowledging it to herself) to be more in need of help than she, the supposedly weak and uninstructed.

She went back to her room confusedly. How kind it was of him to take it like that—

how magnanimous!

Alone now, Peter scanned the approved copy once more. Rather good, after all, of its kind. Queer fellow, Hymack. Rough diamond, of course. Now about that Miss Merridew. Something in him sensed the really almost puzzling devotion in her. Doubtless the spirit of the firm had appealed—called out the best in her. Well; he would make use of it. Afford it an outlet. There was no need to hire a male assistant, as he had thought of doing. She should have opportunity, training from the head of the firm. He would give the girl the chance of a career.

In the flush of his benevolence he lit himself a cigar nearly as expensive as those of Mr. Hymack!

Mr. Busteed was as good as his word. took the girl in hand. The results were not wholly what he expected, for though Mary always manifested a soothing deference, she had a disquieting way of branching out into notions of her own, quite dissociated from Peter's rather rigid formulæ—sometimes directly opposed to them. At such times he used to regret the indulgence that had made him give his assistant her head. They had several important clients; the Mockthorn Tyre Company and the English account for the Glyder Razor Co., Inc., whose mission it was to abolish the strop. And it did not make his position any more agreeable when, as happened more than once, a client would say, "No, we won't need to bother you with a conference, Mr. Busteed. Your Miss Merridew seems to understand pretty well what we want."

There is such a thing as too much competence. She was encroaching. He was secretly pleased when her copy for the Glyder Razor—"Soothing as a Baby's Caress!"—was turned down. (He had foreseen this possibility, but had refrained from hinting it. What could a woman know of the pains of shaving? Let her learn!)

Nor did it please him, somehow, that he could never find fault with her manner. "Just as you think fit, Mr. Busteed." "If

I might suggest——" There was a something which he could not seize. When it happened that they found themselves flatly in opposition, and he insisted in order to assert his imperilled authority, she had an awkward way of saying nothing, just looking at him. One swift, puzzled little glance. Almost estimating.

And yet, reflected Peter with astonishment, this indispensable (horrid term, but he had to use it) had never taken advantage of the situation to squeeze an increase in salary out of him. A girl of that capacity could not be entirely unaware of her own worth, and yet she seemed content to do the work of an expert assistant for the wage of a routine typist. Either she was excessively timid (memories of a certain gentle stubbornness made him shake his head at that) or else——

The conclusion Peter came to was by no means unflattering to himself, and it was true. "In love with me," he thought, "and that's why she's content to do the work she does for two pounds five a week!"

His mind flickered for a moment over the advantages of the economy which this afforded him (no less welcome because the business was growing, for Peter was a careful soul) and then shied it aside as he glimpsed possible dangers. He had always expertly dodged the matrimonial halter. No fellow with any savoir vivre would give half his dinner to have the other half cooked! And men who married their typists . . . It was to be hoped that he had never said anything, not to encourage, nothing that could be misconstrued. No.

The wisest thing would be to give her a rise, say three pounds ten from now on. It was a lot of money for a mere girl, without the harassing expenses of men, but it would relieve him of any implied obligation. Also it would bind her to him with hoops of steel, as that Shakespeare johnny said. Never do to let a girl like that get away from him, either. Of course, there was one way of assuring—— His eye wandered to the bowl of flowers, now daily renewed, the pink of their petals somehow reminiscent.

Madness !

He shook himself out of the dangerous dream, and put her down for an increase to three pounds five. His first impulse had been rash. No sense in spoiling them. On hearing the news she showed gratitude indeed, but not quite the fervour he had looked for. Had Mary been working for money merely she could have closed with an offer

which Mr. Hymack had made privily months before. But fortunately for his peace of mind, Peter did not know this.

Sentiment, however, is a subtle drug. Having once admitted to his mind the image of Mary as a woman, one to be vividly desired, Peter's heart gleesomely took charge of affairs, and he found that henceforward it was utterly impossible for his eye to rest on her blandly immune, as if it beheld a No. 7 Remington.

He was plagued by such contemptible matters as the way the eyelashes lay on her cheek when looking down at notes, sun-glints on hair, the coy tip of an ear—horribly tempting and within reach, too; and—oh crowning imbecility!—the desire that took him suddenly by the nape of the neck and made him want to kiss the crumpled rosepetal of flesh that showed in her gloved hand.

He found himself wanting these things as he had never yearned for anything yet in all his admirably regulated life. Manfully he fought the desire down.

But this invasion pressed on him anew, more strongly, shaking the parched soul within him as a dry pea rattles in its pod. It came reinforced by other desires; scores of them, hundreds—mighty and terrible.

These throve and wrought in him until one day they forced him to speak, in a dry husky voice which he hardly recognised, just as she was leaving about half-past five. "Miss Merridew!" he ejaculated. "Are you—doing anything in particular this evening?" And even while he shuddered at the words, appropriate for a clerk, but for him so hideously banal, something within him leapt, rampaged, exulted indecorously, seemed to bear him up with it to deliciously terrifying heights.

He had spoken. He had done it! The smoke of his bridges was rising now.

Peter was relieved to hear her almost embarrassed admission that she was free. Had she not been, it would have seemed to him monstrous.

Throughout that little dinner, dainty but reasonable, and the performance at the family music-hall, where for next to nothing one swam in an atmosphere of gilt marble and plush, he was clutching at his self-possession, which grimaced just out of reach, phantasmal as the unsensed doings on the stage. There was nothing baffling about Mary, she was enjoying every minute of her treat.

He hailed a taxi afterwards, though she

insisted that she could well go home as usual by herself on the Tube. Once in that enclosed and dusky intimacy, legions of aching longings, strange and uncontrollable, filled him with their maddening fires.

Peter gave one glance at the driver's hunched and indifferent back, drew his companion close with a rather pathetic clumsiness, mumbled he knew not what, and kissed her long, forgettingly. At that touch he seemed to become all one nerve, one great capacity for feeling. He knew no desire, no hope but her! He broke into halting protestations. And as he babbled from the Heaven seven times removed into which her return of the kiss had swept him, she lav back quietly, the happiness of her face a little clouded with puzzlement, hearing what he said, but wondering why his words, his insistent and caressing pressures, the contact of his lips so longed for-why all this, now that it had come, did not electrify her as she had hoped—left her even just a little heartsick.

They said little after that. He seemed to take everything for granted, and she was inwardly distressed by her failure to flame at the fires of his ardour. She could not know that the mind which works without our knowledge, which while we sleep keeps ward over the march of the blood and the breath, the mind which can neither forget nor forgive, had watched from the beginning (far removed from her own passion), tallied, and drawn its own conclusions. She reproached herself for her coldness. But he had seemed content.

The next day he took her out to a little place in Soho which abounded in screens, and while they took their meal he spoke.

"You know, dear, of course we shall marry in time. But let's have things go on as they are for a while. There is no need to be precipitate, is there?" He looked at her caressingly. "We won't be engaged: just an understanding. This is more beautiful, don't you think? You can have a ring to keep, naturally. Not to wear. It wouldn't do, round the office."

And as he made the offer, she knew that he did not wish her to accept it, and felt a little chill, a little depressed. Unknowingly she sensed the conflict in him. He desired her; but still more did he desire that no other man should possess her. He wanted her set aside for him, while he thought things over soberly.

Her pride made her accept what he proposed, but could not prevent her from show-

ing a shade of disappointment. Perceiving this, he advanced more reasons, saying that he was not yet in a position to do what he wished for her, which was not strictly true. If he had been able to face the issue squarely, he would have had to admit that he was terrified of marriage. He dreaded a lifetime's responsibility. And that he must face, if he wanted her. Did he want her so utterly as to sacrifice his cherished liberty, his "ways," and stake everything on the chance of her making him happy? Yes . . . no. could not be sure. It was a fearful price to pay; a man owed it to himself to keep a clear head. He'd be hanged if he knew. Was any woman worth it?

He took her out twice a week thereafter, and was gallant, considerate, but hardly ardent. Perhaps that one wild, searing flame of passion that had leapt up in him, made him long not only for the privilege of taking, but for the greater privilege of giving, had now died low. He never referred to that evening, directly or indirectly. And she was ashamed for him, but would have died sooner

than press him.

Months went by, and the outings dwindled to once a week, and even then there were long, aching silences which neither of them could bridge. She preferred even these to the glib way he would gloze over his attitude, justify, explain. At those times she was near to hating him, but only for a moment. Secretly he congratulated himself on a narrow escape from having been a fool, and more and more he stressed and took refuge behind their official relations. tale of the slow, marching months grew to He wanted her; oh yes—at times the old fires flamed sinister within him. he could not pay the price. A trifle immature four summers ago, Mary was ripe for marriage now, her delicious curves, subtly ripening, a little touch of pride that was instinctive in her walk. These troubled him. and so—in a less degree—did her occasional wistful glance that played across him, questioning, saying what she would not put into words.

Once she did broach the subject indirectly. "Are we always to go on like this, Peter?" she blurted out, then stopped, biting her line

"Don't you consider me," was his vague reply. "You see, Mary, I'm tied, really. Not my own master, in a sense. Only don't think I want to tie you."

Often now she would go and arrange conferences or see clients on her own initiative.

It had been necessary to concede that much freedom. Among others, the Ninon Face Cream people had practically insisted on being free of the services of herself and Mc-Fie, a remarkably brilliant young Scots artist, whose girls' heads on paper looked as if their lips might part in speech at any moment. (He was another of Mary's little discoveries.) She had nothing to worry about now; her salary had been twice increased, and was now two-thirds of her But she seemed to miss the actual value. joy which the work had once afforded her. There was no soul in it now, she was in danger of becoming hardened, disillusioned.

She rather enjoyed McFie, though, who was that rarest of birds, a businesslike artist. He wore his hair short, rode a motor-cycle, and when he promised a drawing for Tuesday midday you might rely on seeing his cool, direct eyes looking across your desk at 11.59. Only a sense of humour, dry but by no means desiccated, and his hatred of bowler hats and umbrellas, differentiated him from the

ordinary business man.

But even Homer was known to nod, and one day when a Pearlo set of eight "pretty girl heads" (each to be furnished with thirty-two perfect teeth, most of them in sight!) was nearly due, Mary decided to slip over to Angus's studio and see how the work was getting on. He was very cautious about promising hurry-up jobs, and he had hedged a bit over this order. Angus opened the door to her, his mouth clamped on two brushes laden with colour. "I've got him!" thought Mary with amused exultation, for the Pearlo peris were a plain Indianink job.

Cocking an eye at the brushes, "Not disturbing you, I hope, Mr. McFie?" said she

innocently.

"Not the least in the world, Miss Merridew," replied the bland Angus. "I'll not say your job's done, but it's getting that way. Only there's whiles I weary of drawing packs of simpering misses, and like to do something real for a change, though you might not think it of me. I'm at it now; have a cigarette to soften the harrowing intelligence? They're real imported Russians, and as cool as mist over a stream. Mostly cardboard tube, though!"

Mary helped herself, smiling at the abrupt transition from poetic to practical. It was often Angus's privilege to make her smile,

perhaps his monopoly, now.

"I'm jolly glad to hear it, Mr. McFie," she laughed, seating herself on an old Mexican

saddle, one of the few places unencumbered

by draperies and "props."

"I often suspected you of leading a double life. You just overdo the 'Caledonia stern and wild' business, you know!" She hesitated. "May I see?"

"You can," he answered. It was his turn to hesitate. "Only I misdoubt you'll like it. Not that I'm questioning your

curtain there—this part of the room's Commerce. Will ye come?"

Feeling dimly disturbed, she followed him. There, with the warm sun of a late June afternoon flooding down on it through the great skylight, was a large canvas, nearing completion. "Hermione, Queen of Sicilia," murmured Angus, "From 'The Winter's Tale,' but I needn't tell you that."



"' I'm jolly glad to hear it, Mr. McFie,' she laughed, seating herself on an old Mexican saddle."

taste, mind ye. Only I'm naturally nervous."

"If it's beautiful I shall not be shocked," she put in quickly. "Surely you know that?"

A baffling grin played round his mouth as he caught her interpretation of his meaning. "It's beautiful," he muttered. "But shocked you're going to be. It's behind the

Mary looked long—and looking, lost herself.

There, before her, miraculously limned, with a vividness that stunned her, was the lovely, tender and ill-fated queen. She was seated on an old carved Italian bench that threw into wonderful relief the texture of her shimmering white satin gown, so real that the fabric seemed palpable. And she leaned

a little forward, her true lips parted, and her loyal eyes gazing into those of her little son, the Prince Mamilius, a lovely replica of her yet more lovely self.

And looking-always looking-Mary saw that the face, that dimly smiling face, still happy, was her own, and hers, too, the face of the child. She looked a faint question at

"Yes," he admitted, in a tone which he strove to render perfectly detached. "I'll no say that she's as bonnie as yourself. But I tried." His voice trailed away.

Half mesmerised by the wonderful art, Mary drew near, stepping none too steadily, in a half-formed wish to see closer into the face of the child, but suddenly found that she could not look for tears. She glanced again at Angus, the wonderful creator of this wonderful thing. His face was flushed with colour, but he looked steadily at her-very steadily.

"That's how I see you, Mary, my dear!"

he told her.

Neither she nor he ever quite knew how his arms came to meet about her; perhaps the Fates that plan so shrewdly gave each a gentle thrust! The wine of life filled her utterly; she knew that such a kiss as that was no less a thing than birth or death itself.

It was quite a while after that Angus came

to himself.

"Gracious sakes!" he exclaimed,-" and

the door unlocked for any of my wild friends to come burrsting in on us! Besides, Mary mine, now it's settled, there's a little matter of business I'd be putting to you."

She laughed happily, and settled (within

sight of the picture), to listen.

Some months later Mr. Busteed called Ruggins, now a gawky youth of nineteen, into his office to take dictation. (Hearing that he was to be "pushed on a bit," Ruggins had put in many tedious weeks of evening classes learning shorthand.) Peter was glaring at a letter.

"Now we've lost that account to them," he grumbled. "And I made that girl, too. Women are all disloyal. Take a letter,

Charles.

"' DEAR MR. HYMACK, er-in reply to yours we much regret your decision, bracket, which we hope is not final, close bracket, to place your work with McFie and Merridew, comma, which we must reluctantly point out is a new and untried concern. Full stop. Fresh paragraph. Have you thought of the seriousness of entrusting your work to inexperienced hands-""

Very red in the face, Ruggins wrote frenziedly. He was already fourteen words behind, and he had forgotten the grammalogue for "inexperienced"!

CRICKET CALLING.

OME and play truant with me, little brother; The Sun is our dad, and the Earth is our mother; June is our sweetheart; the world is seventeen; And the wicket is waiting for us out on the green.

The wicket is waiting; away then together; The lark in the blue sings of cricketing weather; The bat is our sceptre, but who shall be king, When the ball comes along like a stone from the sling?

Come, little pal, leave the work and the worry; Away from the cash and the care let us hurry; The Earth is our mother; the Sun is our dad; And cricket is calling! Come along, little lad! FRED. W. BAYLISS.



[H. N. King.

THE ENTRANCE OF THE RANELAGH CLUB.

ROYAL RANELAGH

By DOUGLAS SLADEN

BEAUTIFUL Ranelagh, which brings the atmosphere of the country house into the heart of London, is the prototype of the Country Clubs of America, and of Sports Clubs all over the world. Officially, it exists for polo, golf, croquet, and lawn tennis. Incidentally, it has a more distinguished list of members than any other Club in the world, including the King and all our Royal Princes, the Duchess of York, the King of Spain and King Manoel.

The Duke of York is its Chairman, an office in which he succeeded the Queen's brother, the Earl of Athlone. He attends all committee meetings. And the Prince of Wales has played a great deal here in private polo matches, which members could watch.

Small wonder, therefore, that when there is a great polo match between Lords and Commons, in which the Prince of Wales plays—or the Duchess of York is in the Royal Pavilion to see a Cup Final and give

away the prizes with her captivating graciousness, its lawns present almost as brilliant a spectacle as Ascot. King Edward and Queen Alexandra came here often. Ranelagh still has two of the grand cream-coloured Hanoverians which drew their State Coach. King George presented them.

The social brilliance of the Club is wedded to polo on week-days, but the dining-room, terrace, and tea-lawns are almost as brilliant on Sundays during the Season, for Sunday is, par excellence, the Members' Day, when the golf links, croquet lawns, and tennis courts are crowded, and big cars roll up one after another to bring the people who have been at luncheon parties in the West End. The scarlet liveries of the waiters add greatly to the scene at leafy Ranelagh.

Other days when Ranelagh is at its best are Children's Day, Aldershot Day, Ascot Saturday and Sunday (on which, if the weather is fine, the women brave it in their Ascot toilettes), and the Saturday and

Sunday after the Eton and Harrow, the best days for seeing the beautiful young daughters of Society dressed for the critical eyes of their brothers' friends. On most Sundays they come down in force, in bewitching sports kit, to crowd the tennis courts and golf links, and enliven tea.

Children's Day, the prettiest of all, introduces a fresh element, the delicious children of Society, exquisitely dressed, who come down to a special fête-champêtre of their own. Such healthy little people they are, mostly girls, with rose and white, or brown and damask complexions, careering about at their own sweet wills, in white, with sashes and splashes of bright, light

colours. They take pretty good care of themselves, though fair sprinkling of very little ones is taken to the room labelled "Lost Children." For their amusement the Committee provides not only the ordinary swings and see-saws, merry-gorounds, goat-chaises and donkeys, but rides in four-in-hands and brakes, tower-chute, cocoanut - shies, Punch - and -Judy shows, boating on the lake, circus attractions, racing, balloonjumping, costermonger's dances, and above all, Japanese daylight fireworks.

On the gymkhana ground are held the

Military Jumping for the prize given by the Queen's brother, and the mounted sports of the Ladies, Police, and Foxhunters. The Horse-shows and Dog-shows of Ranelagh are social events, the four-in-hands being a great feature at the former.

Ranelagh is the most beautiful and exclusive of all polo clubs. No tickets are sold to the public as elsewhere. Admission is only by voucher signed by a member. The ancient lake, a quarter of a mile long, is fed by the Beverley Brook, the last stream in England in which beavers were found. A long pergola of Japanese maples runs from the house to the grotto built for Pope, the poet, to work in when he was staying with Heidegger at Barn Elms, as he and Handel, the composer, so often did.

Beyond it are the third and fourth pologrounds.

To London Society Ranelagh stands chiefly for going down to see the polo and taking tea on the lawn, followed not infrequently by dinner and preceded not infrequently by lunch. Ranelagh has a fine chef. But there has always been a considerable section of members to whom Ranelagh means golf whenever they are in town.

Ranelagh is a short course but tricky. The excellent greens give a stranger his only certainty. At thirteen of the holes a wild shot can take him into the water, and there are other pitfalls if he gets off the fairway. But for the accurate player

it is fascinating. He has the same chance of stealing strokes from Bogie with his wooden and iron clubs as with his putter.

The Lady Golfers' Union's Meetings are held here, and the crack lady players, from Cecil Leitch and Joyce Wethered downwards, play at all its meetings.

A great charm about Sunday golf at Ranelagh is that you can have a Social luncheon party awaiting you after your morning round, and a gay tea-party in the Winter Garden, with a band to cheer it, after going your afternoon round. There is another, even greater, that if you

HASTINGS. going your afternoon round. There is another, even greater, that if you telephone to the golf attendant to arrange a match for you, you may find that your chance opponent is a Judge, or a famous General, who finishes up by sitting next to you at lunch at the golfers' table.

Croquet occupies an important place. Ranelagh croquet tournaments are famous.

The numerous hard tennis courts are so popular that there is a formidable waiting list on Sundays, but on other days you can always get a court. Ranelagh does not have tournaments for "stars" but for its members.

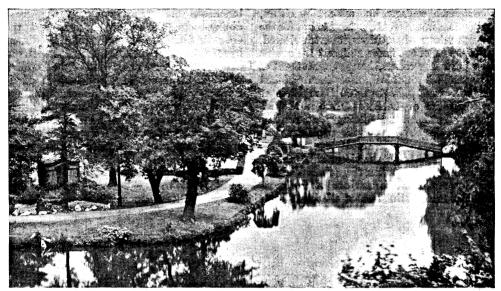


SIR GEORGE HASTINGS.
Vice-Chairman of the Ranelagh Club.

THE HOUSE AND GARDEN.

In the whole of London there is nothing more beautiful than Ranelagh.

On a raised Terrace, haunted by peacocks,



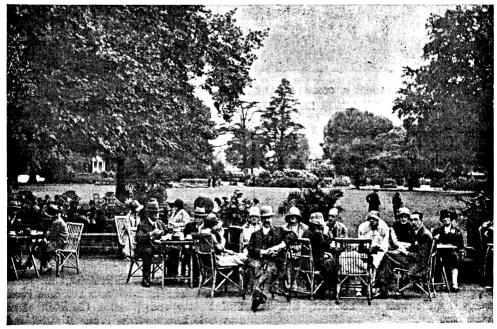
VIEW FROM THE MOUNT, RANELAGH.

[H. N. King.

in a park of 130 acres, known as Barn Elms for more than a thousand years, stands a gracious Georgian mansion of dark-red brick. It faces the setting sun; between it and the sunset stretch a vast lawn of velvet turf, centuries old, and the waters of a lake fringed with wild iris and

scented rushes, beloved of flamingos and pelicans. The Terrace, shut in from the east and north, catches every ray of winter sunshine; the lawn is sheltered from the summer heat by three of the grandest trees in England.

The house was built at the end of the



Percy G. Luck.

seventeenth century, but refaced by Hoare, the banker, in the eighteenth. Except for the knocking down of partitions, it is little altered. On the walls of the inner hall, and the quaint little drawing-rooms, hang engravings of the great Whig nobles, all of them polished men of letters, who haunted Barn Elms at the festivities of the Kitcat Club in the age of Anne, in the farm buildings 1 where their secretary, Jacob Tonson, the publisher, had his villeggiatura, and fitted up a room for them. Marlborough, the victor of Blenheim, and a dozen other Dukes, Sir Robert Walpole and Newcastle, the former one of the most powerful Prime Ministers of the eighteenth

luncheons are served daily in the great dining-room, the painted room, and the open-air dining-room, and tables for dinner have often to be balloted for. The band plays in the alcove at the end of the Terrace, where coffee is served; Ranelagh is particular about its music, and Ranelagh dinners are the most popular of the London season.

But people go to Ranelagh for sport. With spectators Ranelagh is popular because it is par excellence the home of military polo, and of the polo of India and the Argentine which put particularly fine teams and ponies into the field. And Ranelagh has always laid itself out for the accommodation



 $[L.\ N.\ A.$

LORDS v. COMMONS: THE HOUSE OF LORDS TEAM: (Left to right) Earl Beatty. Lord Cromwell, The Duke of Beaufort, and Lord Digby.

century, Pulteney, Godolphin, Somers, Halifax, Wharton, and others of its most famous politicians, with great authors like Addison and Steele and Vanbrugh to give the Club (formed to uphold the Hanoverian succession) its purely literary side, met here. One often sees the descendants of those famous men passing their pictures.

The outer hall contains one of the rapiers used in the Buckingham-Shrewsbury duel, and polo clubs and balls brought by King Edward VII from India. The corridors are hung with fine old sporting prints: the stamp of mellowness and antiquity is upon everything.

During the Polo season three relays of Once known as "Queen Elizabeth's Farm."

of its members. It takes care that average players fond of polo, golf, tennis, or croquet shall have their games in peace. Here you have in the open air the comfort, the dignity, and the repose of a St. James's Street club.

Therefore an illustrious personage can be brought here without notice: he is sure of an elaborate lunch and of absolute privacy. A celebrity has the comfort of being entertained incognito: there are hardly any public receptions of individuals, but there are few celebrities who have not been here. Earl Beatty and Winston Churchill often play polo here, and the Prime Minister and distinguished soldiers like the late Lord Haig play golf—their privacy respected.



RUN DOWN THE GROUND.

On a great day at Ranelagh the visitor who drives up late sees a brilliant spectacle. Parked on the left are hundreds of great cars; in front is a long range of hard tennis courts, and behind them the chief polo ground, crowded with spectators on both sides, and overshadowed by its stately pavilion. Under the old elms beside the pavilion are little groups of highly bred polo ponies, with grooms, proud and busy, ready

for any emergency. The moment a club is broken or anything goes wrong with a pony, the groom is off to meet his master with whatever he wants. Indians add greatly to the gaiety of the scene by their swarming grooms with gay turbans.

When the late visitor sends away her car and goes into the hall, she finds it seething with Society waiting for some one. She apologises to her waiting cavalier.



[Alfieri.

THE BRITISH ARMY v. FEDERATION DES POLOS DE FRANCE FOR THE VERDUN CUP.



[L. N. A.

CHILDREN'S DAY AT RANELAGH.

They go out and find every front seat taken. Should they walk up and down the lawn where the band is playing, content to observe and chat with other late people, they can get good places for the second match, if they go without their tea and take something in the "Chapel." But tea on the Terrace and lawns is one of the prettiest sights of all. Several thousands can be accommodated. If people have come too late to get near the polo, they can always wander about the delightful grounds. Along

the Beverley Brook visitors will see thickets of wild balsams, and perhaps a kingfisher. The centre of beauty is the hill formed when the lake was excavated. The view from it of the mansion, the ancestral cedars, peaceful waters, galloping polo ponies, and the trees of Richmond Park is matchless.

We know that Essex had Shakespeare's Richard II performed under a cedar. Shakespeare may have been present himself. The open-air theatre was put just here for the sake of Shakespeare and Essex.

Coming out of the

theatre and following the path overhanging the lake, one has on the left a rock garden covering the whole hill with blazes of colour on each side of a waterfall whose rocks once made a waterfall in Wales. The water is pumped up by electric power. Proceeding round the foot of the hill, one reaches the Japanesque garden, old enough now to have delightful vegetation as well as lanterns and torii.

Then comes a lotus pond where the lotus plants in summer hide everything but the little eighteenth-century image which sprinkles the fountain. Farther on is one of the artificial ruins in which the taste of that day delighted. It was built by Horace Walpole himself, the creator of Strawberry Hill: it is waving with garden flowers run wild, and

based in miniature Somerset meadows. In them stands an old-world Somerset cottage.

The path goes on to the chief croquet grounds, the herbaceous borders, the rose-pergola, and the delphinium-bank. Look over that bank, and you will see the ancient windows of Jacob Tonson's farm-house, of the very room where he entertained the great men of the Kitcat Club for nearly twenty years, while Anne was Queen and George I was King.



[Sport and General.

THE CHILDREN ENJOY A SKIP IN CHARGE OF A BURLESQUE POLICEMAN.

RANELAGH'S PLACE IN HISTORY.

The story of Ranelagh is the story of a thousand years and one man.

Miraculously a piece of country in the suburbs of London given by King Athelstan (925-940 A.D.) to the Canons of St. Paul's, has remained intact till this day. Most felicitously there was a man with the requisite gifts to turn the manor-house of Barn Elms into the Ranelagh Club.

(who does not know the window where she sat and watched for Essex?), paid many unrecorded visits, since the two houses are only some three miles apart by road. She had a private waterway from the Thames to landing steps on the site of the present dining-room. Essex here hatched the plot which led to his death.

Three children of James I, Princess Mary, Henry, Prince of Wales, and Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen of Bohemia and



Alfiert.

CHILDREN'S DAY.

Mr. Herbert Collings, as "Chinaman," helping to entertain the young people.

It entered History, and perhaps Romance, when Queen Elizabeth presented the lease to her secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham. He entertained the Court here in 1585, 1588, 1589; 1588 being the year of the Spanish Armada.

Barn Elms passed to his daughter, successively wife of the immortal Sir Philip Sidney and of Queen Elizabeth's Earl of Essex. As Essex actually lived here, Elizabeth, who spent much time at Richmond Palace

mother of Prince Rupert, lived here in 1603, the year James succeeded to the throne.

Abraham Cowley, the poet, lived here for two years, and was visited by John Evelyn.

Pepys, as recorded in his Diary, had a habit of rowing up to Barn Elms on Sundays. Under May 26, 1667, he writes:

Then away to my boat and up with it as far as Barn Elms... I walked the length of the Elms, and with great pleasure saw some gallant ladies and people come with their bottles and

chairs and form, to sup under the trees by the water side which was mighty pleasant. So home....

These picnickers had nothing to do with the Manor House. They merely landed from boats. Pepys' Diary mentions several

other visits to Barn Elms on the "Lordes Day."

Here, o n January 16, 1678, near the first tee of the present golfcourse, was fought the celebrated duel between the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Shrewsbury, with t w o friends on either side, because Lady Shrewsbury was Buckingham's mistress. Dressed as a page, she held his horse while they fought. The Earl was run through the breast and died two months afterwards, and one of the Duke's friends was killed outright.

A fresh interest attaches to the duel because the rapiers with which the Duke and the Earl fought were preserved by the Angelo family at Eton

until recently, when they were sold at Sotheby's. The Ranelagh Club failed to secure them at the sale, as an American paid 50 guineas for them, and would have paid more, being a connoisseur of old weapons and armour. They were taken to New York, but some time afterwards the

purchaser very courteously offered to present the Club with one of them, if his name was kept secret. It is framed in the outer hall. There is a wonderful wax model of the duel, very beautiful, and correct to the smallest detail, executed by the sisters Casella after

a drawing by Pettit, the R.A., from materials in the British Museum. It stands in a recess, lit by electric light, in a small diningroom.

All these happenings belong to the old Manor House taken down in the seventeenth century.

Mr. Cyril Fitzgerald, in his delightful and informative monograph about Ranelagh, records the tradition that in one of the underground chambers of the oldManor House the conspirators, all members of the Kitcat Club. met, when son — the Old Pretender—was born to James II, to draw up the invitation to William of Orange.

Tonson's portrait hangs in the Ranelagh Club in two places, as do



BALLOON JUMPING.

also the engravings by Faber of the portraits painted by Kneller which forty-eight of the most celebrated members of the Kitcat presented to Tonson to be hung in the Philosopher's Room where he entertained them. As the room was low they were all painted on canvases of the size

IL. N. A.



A COACHING COMPETITION.

 $[{\it Photopress.}$

since that date known as "the Kitcat."
Heidegger, Master of the Revels to George
II, leased Barn Elms from 1727-50; and
entertained his master here with monster

fêtes. Handel, whose oratorios he produced, constantly stayed with him here: Fielding, the novelist, who lived in the village, did some of his writing here.



[Sport and General.

LADIES' POLO BALL RACE.



ONE OF THE RAPIERS USED IN THE BUCKINGHAM-SHREWSBURY DUEL.

The Club was founded in the last century by Mr. Reginald Herbert. It has no connection—except that it was first established at Lord Ranelagh's house in Fulham—with the famous Ranelagh Gardens. At Fulham they had polo and galloway racing. But the rent was too heavy; in 1884 Mr. Herbert secured a lease of Barn Elms for twenty-one years and ran the Club on the same lines as at Fulham. He still could not make it pay, and after ten years abandoned the attempt. One Sunday in 1893, when Sir George Hastings went down there to play golf, he found the park pegged out as a building

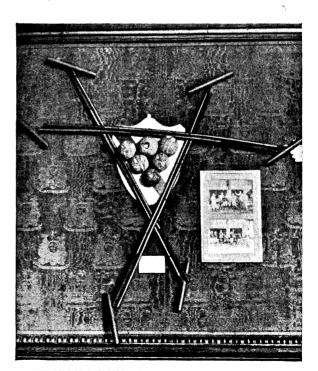
site and at once formed a syndicate to take it over. Four years later he induced the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to grant him a 999 vears' lease. The writer of this article joined the Club in January, 1895, and remembers how Sir, George with characteristic energy set to work, directly he got possession, to make it the ideal country club. At one end he added the great new diningroom—in the style of a banqueting hall with a musicians' gallery -and at the other a winter garden for teas and music in bad weather. He designed the dining-room and did it so skilfully that it is indistinguishable from the old building. Gradually he evolved four polo grounds, an 18-hole golf-course with perfect greens, perfect croquet lawns, grass and hard tennis courts, and a racecourse and gymkhana ground. To-day there are four polo pavilions, an accident hospital, and 220 boxes for polo ponies.

The long and honourable history of the Ranelagh Club culminated in the part which it played in the War. Great polo

players, like the famous Grenfells, and 150 other members, gave their lives. The Club, from the outbreak, was put at the disposal of the War Office, and three regiments in succession were quartered here. The officers slept and messed in the Clubhouse. The men slept in the horse-boxes, and the

present hospital was established for them under Sir George Hastings's personal supervision.

Ranelagh owes its success to its Vice-Chairman, Sir George Hastings. It was his conception; he has built it up inch by inch by his wonderful administrative capacity and his courage as a disciplinarian. No man ever paid more assiduous attention to the duties and details of management, and no man has a greater knowledge of etiquette than the Vice-Chairman of the Ranelagh Club, who has acted as an A.D.C. to Royalty here on a hundred occasions.



SET OF POLO CLUBS AND BALLS PRESENTED TO H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES (KING EDWARD VII) DURING HIS INDIAN TOUR IN 1875–1876.

A gift to Ranelagh Club from King George V.

A BIRD OF TEMPERAMENT

By B. L. JACOT 0 ◉

ILLUSTRATED BY L. G. ILLINGWORTH

S that gay but irresponsible sprig of the aristocracy, St. Leger, has it, our Percy the Starling is a blot on civilisation, a throw-back to the Dark Ages, a searing, incandescent disturber of the Peace—a bird, in fine, of undesirable charac-It is not, however, as bad as all that.

Percy certainly appeared in evidence, cocking his unquenchable eye at Bench and Bar from behind the gilded bars of his cage; and his portrait was widely circulated at the time on the back pages of the more enterprising Press. But one cannot have brains without temperament.

It was as St. Leger leant over the foot of my bed that mention was first made of our Percy. The hour was 10.40 a.m. The man, when I opened my reluctant eyes to the new day, had a patronising grin about his face.

"You were tuned in on the Daventry wave-length, I should say," he mentioned. "B-flat major was the note. The putty is loose round the window-panes. Sorry to wake you."

There is a spot on the carpet worn threadbare by the shoes of this man at the foot of the bed.

"I just rolled up," he went on to lie, avoiding my cool and contemptuous eye, "to find out what happened to you last night when you pushed off to desert the party. We saw you from the window. The Leathern Bottel it was. Tell me, was

"The public-house was incidental," I explained, not without a certain hauteur. "I was taking the air, and I met a man. I found his company more pleasant. After all, if your friends choose to entertainand live—in Shepherd's Market, such air as there is, is of great importance."

I turned over on my pillows, and, like that King of Israel, thrust my face to the wall.

"Your bath is running," this man persisted. "And it was I who turned it on. Up you get! You pushed through the swing doors, I suppose, because you thought the air inside the establishment would be of a purer bouquet?"

"I pushed through the swing doors," I replied briefly, "to meet Percy." I thrust a toe into a slipper. "Percy is a bird you will beg me to allow you to meet."

"Meet a bird?"

"Meet Percy. A bird in a million. The ace of birds. Monarch of the air. A starling with a human vocabulary. Percy is the name, and he was glad to meet me. He told me so himself."

St. Leger eyed me for a moment in doubt. "Go on," he said at length. "So that was what you were up to? Explain about Percy, dear boy."

"Outside our host's humble lodging," I condescended, "I met B. Tuke."
"B. Tuke?"

"B. Tuke. You will know B. Tuke. He told me of Percy in the course of casual conversation about this, that, and the other. The bird is for sale, and when I showed enough interest to disbelieve that a starling could get it across, he took me inside to see for myself. The bird can speak: Percy can sing his song in a Cockney accent. I am going again this morning to see the bird in daylight. I have an option on him."

"Tell me," begged St. Leger after a grave pause, "was there anything else you saw? What about a lizard doing the Charleston? Why not the jolly old dog with ten tails?"

That was the first canto of the Epic of Percy. Disbelief on the part of the man whose young life the bird was to blight. But when it came to the hour of my rendezvous with Percy's proprietor, St. Leger was more than ready with his hat and stick.

In point of fact he insisted on accompanying me to meet that mainstay of the betting-slip and bar-counter-dusting fraternity in the Shepherd's Market. But it would be as well at this point to deal with B. Tuke.

"B. Tuke. Commissions" is the legend that runs across the greasy card he will hand you, if you will allow him, any time you may chance to meet him in the shadier parts of Mayfair. What his commissions are, no one may say, and there are many among the brighter sons of the older aristocracy who have wondered. B. Tuke, he is, and, as he is ready to oblige in almost any useful direction, always in his gentlemanly way, what does it matter to any save Scotland Yard? Only once before had I chanced on B. Tuke, but that was my fault, not his.

He drew us—this man of mystery—through the swing doors of *The Leathern Bottel* that morning with an old-world gesture of hospitality worthy, as St. Leger pointed out later, of the Court of St. James. There was no mistaking his polished way, the cultured and persuasive voice. A man of personality, B. Tuke; accustomed obviously to the idiosyncrasies of the elegant and the habits of Men of Parts. A gentleman's gentleman, anxious to oblige.

"You remembered the bird I mentioned last night then, sir?" he began, when he had led us by privy ways to a parlour where we might enjoy the seclusion it was suggested our distinguished company should command.

"Why shouldn't I?" I asked tersely.

"Why shouldn't I?" I asked tersely.
"I was not suggesting that," he hastened to assure me.

"The apology is my friend's," St. Leger chipped in. "He still persists that the bird can talk. Anyone who can come home with a tale like that——"

Our companion stopped him with a wave of the hand.

"One moment!" he begged, and pointed to a bulky object, draped with a cloth, in the corner of the ill-lit room.

"Well, Percy, old man," he began in an easy conversational tone, addressing the cloth. "How are you feeling to-day?"

"Tight as a lord," came a brisk falsetto from the concealed cage, and St. Leger caught hold of my arm in his astonishment.

"Your friend was quite right, you see!" beamed B. Tuke as he turned his chin over his shoulder to jerk his head at the astonished viscount. "I'll take his cloth off and then you can see for yourself, my lord."

In the clearer and soberer light of day Percy was revealed to us as a strapping starling, blue as a bluebottle's waistcoat, fat as butter, and merry as a monarch.

"Well, gents," the bird crisped, rolling an appraising eye at St. Leger. "What's yours?"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the doubter at

my side.

"A fine bird," commended B. Tuke, from where he was stooping over the cage. "Worth a hundred guineas, anywhere. Had a hundred and fifty offered me last week—only I didn't want the money then. Did I, Percy?"

"Get your hair cut," offered the bird, and thereupon slipped easily into an imitation of a cat's love-scene, so realistic that it started a running dog-fight down the cobbles

of the Market outside.

"A fine bird," repeated its proud proprietor. "Taught him myself. I taught

you, Percy, didn't I now?"

The bird changed legs on his perch, preened a feather with a flourish, then rolling a roguish eye over the features of the old man who was bending over him, began to sing in a clear, womanish voice which made me proud of my little part in the previous evening's proceedings.

"Farewell, my Bluebell!" Percy rendered, without a false note, and St. Leger

licked his dry lips.

"By Jove!" he began in a tone of awe when Percy came to an end of his verse, but the bird shouted him down.

"Chuck him out!" urged Percy. And before St. Leger could speak again there came from the gilded cage a whirlwind of cheers and cat-calls, only too clearly indicative of a mixed reception from the gallery.

"A hundred guineas," repeated B. Tuke wistfully. He crooked a finger to scratch the bird's head as the starling presented it

against the bars of his cage.

"Cheap at the price," put in Percy help-

fully

"I'll take it," snapped St. Leger, who owns the better half of Scotland. "That is," he added quickly, cautiously even, "if you'll throw in the cage as well." St. Leger is a rare lad for a bargain.

"The cage, certainly, my lord. The cloth too," B. Tuke ceded in a fit of unprecedented generosity. "The bird is yours,

my lord."

"Look here-" I began, but my com-

panion took me up.

"Percy's sold now. It's all over," he announced briskly. "You had your chance last night, and you muffed it. Percy is

mine now. By Jove! What a bird! A starling, too. I've heard of parrots and all that sort of thing, but—By Jove! Did you get that 'Farewell, my Bluebell'? You'd make a fortune out of that bird in the halls. What shall I feed him on?"

"Just bird-seed, with a bit of greens thrown in now and then," Percy's trainer advised. "Don't forget his water, he's a temperamental bird. Never mind about a cheque, my lord. If you'll just sign an I.O.U."

"I wasn't," murmured St. Leger absently,

still gaping at the bird.

While Percy's new proprietor bent over the rickety table in the centre of the stuffy little parlour to sign his I.O.U., B. Tuke neatly circled the blue cloth with string at the top and at the bottom of the cage. Leger took up his precious burden and handed over the slip, turning from the gloom of the panelled room into the darkness of the passage. The cage was a large one, of the cylindrical variety, domed at the top and finished at the bottom with a gold tray supported on four sturdy legs. Not the easiest of things to carry down a dark passage and out into the purer world beyond. But St. Leger's touch was the caress of reverence: a first-born in the arms of his young mother could not have been in safer hands.

"Percy," he whispered, his lips against the cloth, when he had carried his wonderbird out on to the cobbles lining the front of the old inn. "Percy, old cock, how're

yer feelin' to-day?"

He stood for a moment with his ear pressed to the cage, but no answer greeted him. The only sound was that of the rasp of a beak against the wood of a perch.

"He's cleaning his teeth. Give him a chance," urged a man with black ears and

an armful of newspapers.

"He's a temperamental bird," B. Tuke wheezed at my elbow. "Set him down for a moment. He'll soon speak. You can't expect much of him while you're jerking him about in a dark cage."

He took the cage from the new master's hand and set it on a wooden bench, bending

his head to the cloth.

"Percy, old boy," begged afresh that otherwise respectable peer, with childish eagerness. "How are you feeling, Percy?"

"Full of little tricks," came huskily from

the interior. "How's yourself?"

St. Leger took up the cage from the bench

with the air of a mannequin taking the carpet in a sable wrap.

"Cleaning his teeth?" he sneered at the man with the tinted ears. "Is that what you call cleaning teeth? That bird's a starling. A starling—understand? Sings like a woman."

"Star-Noosor-Standard?" the man inquired automatically, but St. Leger passed him coldly by. With the blue cylinder dangling at his side he was leading Percy out into a brighter and broader world. You

could tell it from his step.

The affair, as far as my Aunt was concerned, began, to be precise, opposite the second lamp-post down Charles Street. Percy was still stropping his beak at the time, and my attention was divided between this nerveracking scrape and the increasingly venturous tactics of the two curious camp-followers we had managed to pick up in the form of tradesman's boys.

I never heard the car draw up at all. It was the voice that could launch a thousand ships which first burst like a bombshell

upon my apposite reflections.

"George!" summoned Aunt Hesperia, and, as I leapt round at the sound, that butter-coloured limousine with the familiar crest on the panels slid to a standstill at my elbow. Those lips which have done more than even the gallery of the House of Commons to make shorthand unpopular were within a couple of feet of my ear. The tone of voice was cultured and tactful, but the iron will that sent the word out into the blithely unsuspecting world was observed to make the electric lamp standards shudder.

"Yes, Aunt?" I faltered, only too conscious of the blue cylinder which St. Leger, dear St. Leger, was endeavouring to conceal somewhere at the small of my back.

"You are lunching with me this morning,

are you not?"

"I was on my way, Aunt."

"You may step in. We will drive the remainder of the journey." She swept a lorgnette like a searchlight. "Good morning, Lord Leamington."

St. Leger started guiltily, endeavouring, stout fellow, to raise from his lofty brow the hat he already held in his hand before

him.

"You may step in too," she added generously from her point of vantage at the window. "Put your luncheon—or is it a change of clothing?—with the men in the front."



A footman took our Percy from the small of my back, and the gimlet eye of the Lady Hesperia followed him in his Sèvres-blue swathing as he was borne to the isolated glass-house where the work of getting the limousine to cover the ground was done. Not a complaint did the wonder-bird utter. Not a word. Only arpeggio sostenuto as he stropped up his beak.

Inside the limousine my Aunt and the bereaved viscount crossed eyes in hostility.

It was plain that Percy was the casus belli, but not a word was said. To be seen walking in the street with a man carrying a suspicious, sausage-shaped bundle was clearly an offence against the conventions which have made Mayfair such as it is. St. Leger, it was obvious, was waiting for the opening swell of his requiem, abandoning, as experience had taught him, all thought of making a duet of it. It was, thank Heaven, St. Leger who was carrying our Percy at the



hand and set it on a wooden bench. bending his head to the cloth.

point of impact—but that was not to say that I had not been seen walking with him.

The first time that St. Leger made his bow in the house in Berkeley Square, to a certain extent, he got away with it. in those days he brought his hoop with him and his best velvet trousers. the course of visits exchanged during the care-free days of schooling, his reputation as a friend and mentor soon became mud in the eyes of my Aunt, and it was many years before that leading citizen resigned herself to considering him much in the same light as measles. Having contracted these, as everyone knows, it is unlikely that they will occur again. I, it was considered, \mathbf{had} contracted St. Leger in my innocent youth, therefore, it was not unreasonable to presume that I was now immune from successors to that particular type of bug. The reasoning is sound, but, it must be ceded, a trifle hard on St. Leger.

From the second lamppost in Charles Street to the house in Berkeley Square is a mere bagatelle, but in the course of those few yards St. Leger revealed to the world the subtleties of his master mind.

"We were on the point, Hesperia," Lady began, with a slow intake

of breath, "of paying you this visit-first, in the hope that I might be invited to remain to luncheon, and, secondly, to make a little presentation . . ."

He broke off with a cryptic bow, contrived elegantly from the waist as he sat.

'Take luncheon with us certainly," rejoined my Aunt, after a suspicious pause. "But what, pray, is the presentation?"

Avoiding the desperate inquiry in my anguished eye, he smiled back at her.

George and I have only this morning acquired a truly remarkable bird," he lied, dragging me into complicity in the affair as a factor of safety in case of accident. "It was George's suggestion in the first place—but I warmly agreed—that we should hand this starling over to you for safe keeping in your aviary——"

"Starling?" echoed my Aunt, unbending nevertheless as he touched on her only human vice. "Was that a starling in the bundle I noticed you were carrying?"

St. Leger nodded. "For you," he explained with a generous flourish. "A starling to put among your dear birds. It was our first thought . . ."

At this point happily we arrived at the house, and no more was said until I had him in the privacy where our coats were removed from us.

"We shall be able to borrow him whenever we want him," he explained patiently. "Besides, if you're so keen on the bird, what's to prevent his getting 'lost' one day when we've had him for a while to demonstrate him to the boys? What else could I do? She took it like a Christian, and we owe her one for that affair with the policeman and the chorus-girl in the servants' hall that night. If you—"

"Percy's your bird, and you can jolly

"Besides, the man who looks after your Aunt's little flock will know how to look after Percy. He's a temperamental bird and wants better care than you or I could give him. He wants a mother's love and green stuff and all that. What's it matter, if we can have him out to show the boys whenever we want him? He'd be a nuisance if we had him chatting all the time. What I mean is, 'Farewell, my Bluebell!' is all right in its place, but—"

"Very well," I insisted firmly, and, as it turned out, wisely, "Give her the bird. It was your hundred bucks, anyway. You've managed to drag me into it so far, but if anything goes wrong, it's your funeral, understand? What if Percy begins his bar-parlour language at luncheon?"

"That," answered the man who owns half Scotland, "remains to be seen."

It was indeed true than my Aunt had taken it like a Christian. In the later stages of the luncheon—a cheerful and even matey meal—the order went forth for Percy to be brought up from the servants' quarters and unveiled within view of the table. Percy took it well. Perched on a three-legged table at the elbow of the chatelaine, the gilded cage set off the lines of his figure to a regal perfection. He preened his glossy

plumes, he rolled his lordly eye, he toed it like the monarch he was, back and forth over his speckless perch, he blew out his spangled chest, meeting his new proprietress fearlessly eye to eye, he flirted his tailfeathers roguishly, he levered his gleaming beak open to give utterance to profound thought—and then, considering better of it, he winked his knowing eyelid. In fact, he lived up to his purchase price in all—thank Heaven!—but word of mouth.

"He's a fine bird," announced my Aunt at length, after the critical survey of the expert. "Very nice. Most kind of you, I'm sure."

In her aviary this public-minded citizen is known to keep more dissolute parrots in uncongenital and liverish idleness than even Mr. Chippem on the Tottenham Court Road. Her word is the last when it comes to our feathered friends.

Percy pushed his head forward like the courtier he was, and, crooking a jewelled finger, our hostess scratched his head. For one awful moment Percy held my eye. Blasphemy loitered on the tip of his beak; but he let it loiter. Either it was my expression or the freshness of his new environment. From the chronic tautness of St. Leger's waistcoat I could see that worthy kept a hearty cough in reserve as a counterblast for any indiscretion from behind those gilded bars. It left him with a hungry luncheon.

"We will have him loose on my hand," announced my Aunt as she withdrew her finger to unlatch the catch of the cage. "Tweet, tweet! Come along, little birdie!"

Percy restrained by the bars of his palace was one thing: but Percy free to roam and soliloquise was another.

"I assure you," St. Leger and I began in duet, but the damage was done. After one appraising glance in the direction of the fingers that have dabbled in a thousand pies, he accepted the invitation and left his cage with a gay flutter of wings. Perched on the hand of the lady who was now responsible for his nervous temperament, he cleared his throat musically and ran up and down his scale.

"Gorgeous!" breathed the lady.

"Ye Gods!" moaned St. Leger beneath his breath. "He's going to let loose, now.

But Percy never had a chance. St. Leger's desperate fit of prohibitive coughing took the air in perfect synchronisation with my own precautionary measure. The blast

of it was too much for his nervous temperament. Skimming the chandelier in graceful though precipitate fright, Percy hung for a moment over the flowery pinnacle of an ancestor in his gilt frame. A moment's scrutiny of the face in the picture served—quite rightly—to change his mind. It was on the top of the open window frame, with one foot and one wing out under God's free skies, that he chose to rest and consider the matter.

"Don't move, anyone!" commanded my Aunt in a hoarse undertone when she had shrivelled us both with a glance. "Don't speak or move!"

With movements slow and stealthy as those of a stalking cat she insinuated herself in the direction of the suspicious bird.

"Tweet, tweet, my little birdie," she urged in the tones common to Empire-building spinsters misapplying affection. "Tweetie, tweetie!"

On his native heath in Shepherd's Market there is no doubt that Percy would have been ready with the appropriate reply to that sort of thing. In the cloistered sanctity of a Mayfair dining-room, the poor bird faltered. One must remember, too, that he had just had a glimpse of that ancestor of Aunt Hesperia's and mine responsible for rabies in dogs.

"Tweet, tweet," was all he could think of in reply, and dropped feebly off his window perch into the emptiness beyond.

Now, had Percy turned to the left on leaving the precincts of 197, Berkeley Square, it would never have happened. He would never have appeared in evidence or on the back page. He turned, however, to the right, and that was how he met General Horace Strapp, C.M.G., O.U.D.S., G.O.K.W.

The world at large is not in the habit of feeling pity towards the gallant Horace, but he has, at least, this in his favour where sympathy is desired. It must be admitted that he is unfortunate in not only having his town house next to that of the Lady Hesperia Hythe, but also in having to exchange insults with her in Yorkshire over the fence of the back gardens, so to speak, of their respective estates. Once adjacent would be more than enough, but in the Country as well as in Town is putting too fine an edge on it. General Strapp is not of the type who cares for putting a fine edge on it, and there is, too, his story of the fox that was shot. But here it must be made quite clear that this fine old soldier is in error. If a fox was shot, my Aunt had nothing to do with it. Kynoch Primax will cost you 18s. the hundred—that is to say, a shilling for five, or more than twopence for a cartridge. My Aunt would hold that no fox is worth twopence.

Percy, in his innocence, made for the open ventilator in the roof of the glazed-in veranda running round the back of the General's house on the southern side. And, what is more, it was in this apology for a conservatory that the General was in the habit of taking his meals—the only place in the house, in fact, where he could accumulate fug enough to take him back to his days in India.

Now Percy was not used to violent exercise. All he sought was refuge, but, unfortunately for him, as he took up perching room in his new home, the first thing he did was to attract attention to himself by a comradely chirrup of greeting. The gallant soldier directly underneath threw his eyes heavenward from the table spread before him, turning blue in the process.

"Another bub-bird," he gasped. "Another bub-bird from the woman next door!"

No man likes to be called "sweetie," and in fairness to the General it is necessary to refer in passing here to the recent trouble he had had with a parrot who steered a similar course to that of our Percy. Safe behind a ledge of bricks at the edge of the roof of the conservatory a prize rock bird had called the General "sweetie" at intervals for the best part of two days. It upset the General's meals. But it upset him more when the bird, taking advantage of a moment of unpreparedness during the changing of the heavily-armed guard below, slipped with a leisurely flap of his wings back through the ventilator, and so home, in complete safety, without a 12-bore or Service revolver of the battery below having been let off to cheer him on his way.

Percy, it will be seen then, had a disturbing effect on the General. But he was not the bird to take advantage of bad temper in another. He levered open his beak and ran a silvern breath up and down his scales.

"Ah! Werf! Cooks!" strangled the man at his simple meal. "Quick! Fetch me my revolver. That bird, I'll—"

me my revolver. That bird, I'll——"
"Excuse me," came the voice of St.
Leger from the edge of the roof-ventilator
smoothly. "Sorry to bother you, but a
bird——"

"Ha! you and your bird!" fumed the soldier below. "Going to shoot it. Ha!"

As we watched—St. Leger leaning half over into the room, and myself chin on his shoulder at the extreme edge of the stone balcony which connected the two houses—as we strained forward, a butler presented the General with a Colt service revolver on a salver. With a cry of rapture the old campaigner examined the chambers, leaping to his feet.

Percy, poor bird, surveyed the man with a look of intelligent curiosity. He never thought to move on. Maybe he trusted the General wouldn't shoot at a sitting bird. But Percy did not know the gallant Horace.

The man below him raised the revolver and steadied it over the wrist of his other arm. Percy bent over to get a better view. The General drew a delicious breath—

and it was then that I felt St. Leger's shoulders drop

away from me.

My right shoe must have caught the General somewhere near the mouth, for that was the first part of me he bit. I was, however, lucky; for St. Leger, who jumped clear of him, was called upon for the first few seconds to act as an animated target. Three sighting shots the General got in while he bit, and then St. Leger got the revolver.

"A hundred and five pounds, I paid for that bird," the incensed viscount announced, entering

rapidly into the spirit of the duel. "I'l teach you to shoot at him!"

The first of the three shots left to him for return he wasted in removing the rubber clip from my right sock suspender.

As I moved tactfully away from the man on the floor, I became conscious that the Law had already arrived. There is, it is said, two policemen for every kitchen in Grosvenor Square.

"In the name of the Law," cried our constable, unnecessarily, but he broke off short as the second shot took away the left horn of his waxed moustachio.

"If you so much as damage a hair of that bird's head," St. Leger continued, unreasonably, and with an entire disregard



The third shot, however, took him unaware. His finger, he now says, slipped on the trigger. At any rate, the effect was the same.

"That settles it!" put in the constable, far too calmly, pressing a handkerchief to the back of his trousers. "Generals or admirals—I don't give a snap if it's the Prime Minister—along to the station you come—all of you. Come along, lively now!"

He took the empty revolver from St. Leger's hand, then jerked the inarticulate campaigner to his feet.

"Come along, sir," he beckoned to me,

and I realised then that the time was opportune for quick thinking. He blew his whistle and herded the dazed duellists into a professional bunch. "Come along, sir," he repeated grimly, cocking his eye at me.

"One moment, officer," I pleaded. "I'll come along and help you in this little matter with pleasure. When I followed you into this house— What I mean is, the bird,

you see? It should-"

The General and his fellow-prisoner both began to speak at once, and it needed a stern shake from the constable to restore

That bird'll have to appear in evidence, I expect. . . . We'd better have him."

By then reinforcements had arrived to swell the crowd of servants: the procession

moved painfully on.

"You shall have the bird, officer," I promised, and as the prisoners were led from the room St. Leger turned on me that soulful glance that one may catch by moonlight, when a cow wakes from a pursuing nightmare under the hedgerows. . . .

Percy, of course, had flown. When I returned to the agitated household next



"I was, however, lucky; for St. Leger, who jumped clear of him, was called upon for the first few seconds to act as an animated target."

order. Both, however, realised by then that it was a delicate affair, and their resistance was merely formal.

"I see your point, sir," the man of law ceded after a thoughtful pause. "I wasn't aware that you were not one of the party. It would be as well if you would catch the bird and bring him along to the station.

door I found that the master-bird had trailed straight for the only home he knew as soon as the riot began. He was stropping his bill on the perch of his cage. I slammed his door and double-locked the catch.

"What was the firing?" demanded my

Aunt.

"The General," I replied, not without a

certain crispness, "and St. Leger. Turn and turn about."

"Was the General hit?"

"Only a policeman—and myself."

"A pity," sighed my Aunt, then, as a soothing afterthought: "There was a crowd round the taxi when they took them off," she breathed. "I'm glad you weren't mixed up in it. That man and his foxes!"

I arrived at the station in time to assist with the formalities of robbing the cells for the time being of the patronage of a distinguished viscount. The procedure is now becoming familiar to me. Our Percy, however, was doomed to remain, and it was as he lounged on his perch in the charge room that the swift reasoning shaped itself inside my head. Scenes such as he had witnessed might reasonably have been held to have stimulated the artistic temperament of such a master bird. But Percy was mute. There were many things he might have had to say. But all he could do was to strop his beak.

I led St. Leger outside; steam was still

hissing from his ears.

"If they want the bird they will want B. Tuke," I told him. "They'll want to know his history. I have a theory. Care to come along to Shepherd's Market, what?"

Like a lamb now, he let me lead him. At The Leathern Bottel he took a seat upon the wooden bench. It was obvious that he had no further interest in the affair. No man cares to be shot at, and his mind dwelt on the General.

"I want B. Tuke," I said to the man with the black ears, in my innocence.

"He left for Doncaster this morning," he replied automatically; and it was then I knew.

"I want to see him about buying a bull-terrier," I put in quickly. "I have a friend who is willing to pay up to fifty guineas for the right dog."

"I've got just the dog for him," chipped in the well-known voice, appearing from Doncaster at my elbow. "Fifty guineas is dirt cheap, too. He's worth—"

I led B. Tuke firmly out of earshot of the despondent man on the bench. In a few crisp words I put it to him, and he

scratched his head.

"You will have to appear in court," I told him. "Percy, too." I held his bright eye steady as a rock for a long moment.

"Well, what about it?"

"No need, I suppose," he began tentatively at length, "to go into the whole matter in court. His lordship "—he jerked his round head in the direction of St. Leger—" wouldn't like it."

"He would not," I replied.

B. Tuke pondered for a moment, weighing the issues.

"Well," he began at length, "it's like this." He held up his fist well to the side of his plump body, pointing to it with the other hand, in the approved ventriloquial style. And even as I watched there slipped on to the air of Shepherd's Market that touching ballad "Farewell, my Bluebell!"

[Down the yard, St. Leger sat mute and unheeding. What with the General and that unflinching public servant entrenched behind the charge-sheet, one argued that for the time being he had had enough. It was kinder to let him sit. But B. Tuke was clearing his throat.]

"Never mind the cat-fight," I begged.
"You may take my word for it that no

more will be said."

"You're a proper gentleman," commended B. Tuke gratefully. "You ought to be a lord. About that dog now, you were mentioning——"

"Forget it," I urged. "I am not rich

enough.

THE VAGRANT.

If I could close my ears
To the sound of the wind in the trees,
To the coaxing, siren voices
In the wake of the south-west breeze:
And see no more the moonlight
Flooding the old grey hills,
Or the plumbless depths of the corries
That the mist-dark shadow fills:
Or smell the breath of the pine woods
Or the distant tang of the sea,
I might find content in your arms, my dear,
And peace between you and me.

AGNES-MARY LAWRENCE:

FALSE PRETENCES

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

● ILLUSTRATED BY J. MILLS
 ● ●

"AKE Martia," said the Professor solemnly, and then he paused so long that the man standing by the window gave him a queer glance, as if he waited, with something of consternation, for words that would change the significance of those already spoken.

But the Professor, it would seem, had no more to say, and was again absorbed in the manuscripts on his desk.

· Godfrey Clavell waited for another two minutes; then he said firmly:

"No. That's impossible. I couldn't do that."

The Professor lifted a glance of bewildered amazement.

"What is impossible?" he asked, and Clavell, interpreting the question as a rhetorical generality, made a little gesture of impatience.

"This is, at least." He paused to choose his words with deliberate care, though the look of impatience still showed in the lines of his tanned face. "To take a woman into the wilds of Tibet—of all countries—on a forlorn hope such as this search for Ferguson must be admitted to be—surely you will agree to the impossibility of that—for Martia or any other."

"My dear Clavell!" said the Professor in frank and obvious dismay. "Do you imagine I should suggest such a thing?"

"I can imagine that Martia might have," said Clavell with a short, rather grim laugh, that revealed no hint of embarrassment at his mistake. The Professor did not seek to contradict him.

"When I said 'Take Martia,'" he explained precisely, "I did not mean it literally. It was my intention to continue the sentence, but I fear I am frequently absentminded. I should have said: 'Take Martia as an excellent—or deplorable—example of feminine inconsistency.'"

"Why?" demanded Clavell bluntly. He realised that if he wished to pursue the conversation he must keep the Professor's

attention up to the mark with frequent direct questions.

"Why?" The Professor swept together his manuscripts with a gesture of unwonted decision, and took off his glasses to emphasise the fact that the subject had his undivided consideration. "When Ferguson was here you would have believed that my niece found his company not only negligible but definitely distasteful. And now she turns round and declares that all her happiness depends on his safe return."

"Ah!" Clavell's voice held an odd note.

"Did she say that?"

"Yes. That was before she knew that you were going. But she hoped very much that you would go, I think," the Professor paused, frowning a little, then added in a dry voice, "without her having asked you to do so."

Clavell was silent, looking out at the thundercloud that showed above the vivid green of the beeches on the hillside, a towering argosy of lavender capped with alabaster pink and snowy white—inevitably recalling those magnificent storm-clouds that nightly piled the horizon in that country that held the secret of Roger Ferguson's fate.

And Roger Ferguson's fate represented

Martia's whole happiness.

Somehow Clavell hadn't thought of Martia in connection with the affair; perhaps he hadn't thought of Martia very much at all. He had come to the little stone house at the end of the valley because the Professor was interested in the scientific side of the expedition of which he and Roger Ferguson had been members, and because he very sincerely liked the older man. Clavell himself had found attraction in the adventurous side of the undertaking as much as in its scientific importance, which the Professor recognised as natural enough for a man of his years and character. Martia's uncle had always vaguely preferred Godfrey Clavell to Roger Ferguson, and had believed that Martia shared that preference, although she and

Godfrey had never had very much to say to one another. For to Clavell, indeed, Martia Collett was, it appeared, simply the niece of his friend and his hostess at Little Bellstock House.

When the expedition had returned, bring-

ing Clavell but leaving Ferguson to a mysterious but evidently unpreventable fate, Martia had suddenly made the acknowledgment which had amazed and perturbed the Professor so much that he had \mathbf{c} onfided it to Godfrey Clavell. Clavell had come to announce his intention of going out in search of Ferguson, and the Professor. although secretly deploring the risk which might only too probably sacrifice the one without saving the other, could still appreciate and understand the force which prompted an action the gallantry of which Clavell would have bluntly denied. That was why

he had told Clavell of Martia's amazing revelation; he had an unacknowledged yet intense desire to make Clavell understand that Martia relied on him to save Ferguson. It had not occurred to him that until now Clavell had scarcely given Martia a thought. Martia was very charming, as Roger Ferguson had recognised.

Had he looked at Clavell now, the Professor might have been arrested by the expression on the younger man's face. But Clavell's silence had the inevitable result; the Professor's thoughts went back to the papers on his desk: he replaced his glasses,

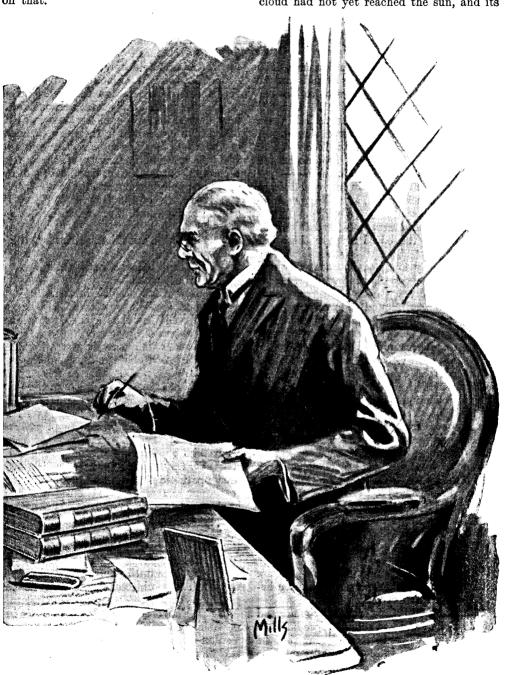


and, after a moment, sat down again and took up his pen. By the time Clavell turned from contemplation of the thundercloud, his host was once more utterly absorbed. He gave Clavell an affectionate but vague smile.

"You're not going until next week, are you? There are several things I wanted to

speak to you about. I have a note of them somewhere here. . . . Of course you must stay here until you sail. Martia and I insist on that."

The first thunderclap came as Clavell closed the study door and crossed the cool, panelled hall leading to the garden. The cloud had not yet reached the sun, and its



"It is very kind of you," said Clavell briefly, from the doorway. The Professor was far too deeply engrossed to hear in his quiet voice an odd note of constraint. brilliance was golden upon the May blooming of lilac, tulips and peonies; the swallows were wheeling and skimming low over the hillside, with the flash of it on their blueblack wings. To Clavell, pausing in the doorway, came an oddly vivid realisation of the familiar beauty of this corner of green England. He had always felt an affection for it, remembered it when he was thousands of miles away; but now, it seemed, he saw it with the eyes of another man—and that man Roger Ferguson.

Whatever fate had befallen Ferguson, if he were still alive his thoughts would turn to this green valley near the sea, to the old house that was Martia's home. Clavell's firm mouth set grimly as he realised how, for a moment, he had unconsciously put himself in Ferguson's place; in any other circumstances it might have been accounted to him for sympathy: but in these—

He broke off abruptly in his reflections as his long sight recognised a small figure coming up the footpath in the valley. It was Martia who, he remembered, had taken the dogs down to the beach early in the afternoon.

She was, as yet, a good distance away, and would inevitably be caught by the storm before she could reach home. Clavell turned back into the hall, found an enveloping coat, and swung off down the hill to meet her.

A little hurrying, breathless wind had sprung up; the thundercloud moved before it, and broke in great splashing drops that thickened to a deluge. There was a great stone barn in the field Martia was crossing and, by common consent, they ran for its shelter, while Clavell was conscious of an odd unwillingness for the tête à tête that circumstances had forced upon them. A day—an hour—ago it would have been different: Martia, it seemed, had only now acquired that significance in the affair of Roger Ferguson which made Clavell ill at ease in speaking of it to her. Yet that they should speak of it seemed inevitable, and Clavell, standing back against the bundles of golden reed with which the barn was piled, heard her say quietly:

"Uncle Ralph has told me what you are going to do. It is—what I would have be-

lieved of you and of Roger."

"Of Roger?" He swung round and looked at her, and had echoed those last two words before he could recall them; but he felt the blood rise in his face as he met the steady glance of her great grey eyes.

"Of Roger—that he should win such real

friendship," she said.

Clavell fought down a sudden grim desire to smile at the idyllic picture her words conjured up. The risk for his friend! The gallant venture inspired by a great comradeship in the ends of the earth! So Martia saw his decision, with that sure, starry look of hers from which he involuntarily turned his What could he say? To tell her the whole ugly truth was impossible, and, he told himself, unnecessarily harsh. quality of sureness, proud yet gentle, had touched him more deeply than he imagined; he had not thought, an hour or two ago, that the situation could have troubled him so much. He looked away from her, out of the barn door at the grey veil the deluging rain had drawn across the fresh young greenery of the valley, and, practical as he was and little given to poetic imagery, his mind drew a parallel between the ruthless beating of the storm on apple-blossom and silken beech-leaf, and the result of the truth upon Martia's sure serenity—and her faith in Ferguson.

Then he heard her voice again, very steady and quiet:

"There is—a chance, at least?"

"Yes; a chance."

She drew a little quick breath.

"Thank you."

And Clavell knew that he could not tell her the whole truth.

He wished, with a sort of desperation, that the storm would abate and so end this enforced tête à tête; he had never felt so restless and ill at ease, or so helpless in the force of circumstance. Martia's words echoed: "It is what I would have believed of you... and of Roger... that he should win such real friendship"; and the mockery of them drove him to silence.

Let her think him awkward, churlish, even unsympathetic towards her point of view: it did not matter, so that she did not guess at the truth. At the first break in the storm he proposed that they should "make a dash for it"; he added abruptly that he must leave Little Bellstock that same evening.

"But Uncle Ralph and I agreed that you must stay here until you sailed, and that is not until the nineteenth. Didn't he tell

you?"

"Yes, I'm sorry. But I'm afraid it's impossible. I must be in town—I've got to see Vernon—he was with us out there, you know—and there's a thing or two for my kit. . . ."

He was conscious of a queer little pause following upon his words. Then Martia said simply:

"I understand. I'm sorry, too."

When the moment of his departure came

he saw, with some newly awakened perception of her, the tenseness behind that sure serenity; but when she said, as she held out her hand to him, "Roger is more than fortunate in his friendships," Clavell suddenly knew that in this, at least, he could not continue under false pretences—could not go away leaving her to believe that fine romantic fiction of his risk for his friend.

Because there was so little time to explain, with the shabby dogcart waiting to take him to the Junction, and the Professor already advancing from the library doorway—perhaps, too, because of that steady grey-eyed gaze of Martia's, Godfrey Clavell could not stop to choose his words, but said, bluntly and awkwardly:

"It isn't just as you think. I can't go—letting you believe that—when it isn't true. I mean about the reason of my going to find Ferguson. It's not—because of—my friend-ship for him. Martia, if I could tell you—."

He broke off suddenly, stumblingly, at the look that had flashed into her grey eyes, and for a breathing space shone there in eloquent understanding of his incoherent declaration. In astonishment and dismay he realised that understanding—with a quick intuition that yet owed nothing to personal vanity.

He had no opportunity for more, for the voice of the Professor's groom-gardener was protesting anxiously that old Punch couldn't do the five miles of hilly road in time for the train unless they started now. So Clavell felt Martia's slim fingers in his, and found them oddly cold. . . .

And he went away with the knowledge that in his endeavour to disclaim the rôle of devoted and self-sacrificing comrade, he had all unwittingly left Martia to believe that it was for her he took the gallant risk, for her sake alone that he would find Roger Ferguson—because he cared——

Martia had believed that, and every line of her expressive face had involuntarily declared that she was—glad. Yet, an hour or two ago, as they faced one another in the old barn down in the valley, she would have him understand that it was Ferguson alone who counted for her.

"Of Roger—that he should win such real

friendship.'

The inflection in her low, clear voice sounded in Clavell's ears as plainly as when she spoke the words; he remembered, too, her uncle's absolute conviction concerning her feeling for Roger Ferguson. And those two echoes seemed, somehow, in utter confliction with that other, later memory of

Martia's small face, the shining of her big grey eyes and the curve of her mouth, the touch of her cold fingers.

Clavell, biting the stem of an empty pipe, could find no answer—until a third memory came to mock his perplexity.

"Take Martia—as an excellent—if deplorable—example of feminine inconsistency."

Yet, it seemed, he was not satisfied with that explanation. For, frowning angrily, he said under his breath that the old fellow knew nothing whatever about it. . . .

There remained four days before the boat on which Clavell had taken his passage was due to sail. On the third of these he came face to face with Roger Ferguson.

Ferguson was alone, and it seemed at first as though he meant to evade Clavell. Then he changed his mind, and crossed the hotel lounge with outstretched hand and an odd smile on his good-looking countenance. Clavell, it appeared, noticed the smile but not the hand, whereat the one was intensified and the other quickly withdrawn.

"I've just heard," said Ferguson coolly, "that you're off to rescue me. I'm more than grateful, Clavell, I assure you. If we hadn't met I suppose you would have gone. Perhaps you'd have found the unpleasant fate that I had the luck to escape. There'd have been paragraphs in the papers, wouldn't there? 'Self-sacrifice of English explorer in Tibet. Perishes in search of his fellow-countryman. The irony of fate—friend safe in England before he sailed.' And then—all capital letters—'His Life for His Friend.' Upon my soul, Clavell, I believe you've just missed being a popular hero."

The mockery of it—all the deeper because of the particular memory it evoked—brought a dull flush to Clavell's face. But he only said, evenly:

"You know why I wanted to find you, anyway."

The other's eyebrows went up.

"If it wasn't for the reasons Î've stated—I can't think. Unless "—suddenly the smile came back with an added twist of derisive enjoyment—"you've been down to the Colletts', haven't you? Perhaps—Martia asked you to go——?"

He had the satisfaction of seeing that in some way that shaft had struck, although he could not know that before Clavell's eyes was the picture of Martia's face, with its sudden radiant look.

Clavell said harshly:

"What have you done with those maps

and notes that were-missing-on the day you-disappeared?"

Ferguson laughed.

"Really, my dear fellow! Did Martia want you to ask me that? You must have told her quite a pretty story; but perhaps she did not share your suspicions. On the whole, I think she would not; she is not suspicious by nature, and I happen to know her rather well." He watched Clavell's face through narrowed eyes.

"I have told Miss Collett nothing," said Clavell curtly.

"That was generous of you, Clavell! Or was it because you preferred that she should believe you were the gallant, self-sacrificing friend? More noble a rôle, of course, than

treachery and duplicity; the Ferguson who

now stood before him, speaking with an

that of avenger? I suppose Martia appreciated that, didn't she?""

amused drawl.

"Where are the papers?" repeated Clavell steadily. Once again the grimness of his face betrayed to the observant Ferguson that his shot had gone home, and for once he him reckless.



last sentence; his mind went back to the Professor's perplexity: "And now she declares that all her happiness depends on his safe return."

Martia and Ferguson—the Ferguson whose whole bearing now confirmed the things he had always feared; the Ferguson capable of least wish them to be," he said with malicious satisfaction. "And at no little advantage to myself. I may point out to you that I was a free agent—not attached to the Expedition legally at all. So that any desire to make trouble—I beg your pardon?"



"'It isn't just as you think. I can't go—letting you believe that—when it isn't true.'"

He checked himself suddenly, as if indeed he hated the thought of speaking Martia's name in connection with this affair. Ferguson was regarding him with unabashed and malicious amusement.

"I have come back—as you say, to Martia—because I rather think she will be pleased to see me. As to the other affair, well, she isn't very likely to hear of that unless you tell her. And somehow I fancy you'll continue in your noble forbearance

—for Martia's sake." He glanced at his watch. "As a matter of fact, I'm going down to Bellstock at once. So if you've no messages——?"

Clavell watched him walk out of the hotel lounge with brisk yet unhurried steps. Those maliciously spoken words—"for Martia's sake"—went echoing through his brain. And the strange thing was that it had taken Ferguson's taunt to make him realise their truth.

Roger Ferguson had gone down to Bellstock with the intention of seeing Martia; but it seemed that he was to be disappointed. For less than half an hour after he had walked out of the lounge of Clavell's hotel, Martia walked in—and, having inquired for Clavell, met his involuntary astonishment with an odd little laugh.

"I came because I couldn't let you go—out there—under false pretences. It wasn't fair that you—that you should face a risk, like that—believing anything but the truth. When you said good-bye—three days ago—I let you believe that I—cared for Roger Ferguson. I thought, you see, that you were going because he was your friend too. And then—you made me believe that it wasn't for that—but for me." Her grey eyes, wide and lovely, were lifted to his. "You mustn't go, thinking that I care—like that—for Roger. It isn't true—I never did."

For a long moment Clavell was silent. Then he said in a hard voice:

"At least I owe you the truth too. You thought, at first, that I was going because Roger was my friend—and all the time it was because I hated him for what he'd done—meant to find him and make him suffer. It wasn't a personal affair—just something connected with the Expedition . . . it doesn't matter about that now—for you—"

He paused. "Ferguson is safe—here in England. I've just seen him."

And at Martia's little cry he looked at her

quickly.

"Then—then you won't have to go—anyway, you won't have to go——"

' No.''

She stood very still and straight before him.

"But you would have gone—without telling me—whatever it is he has done——"

"I thought you cared for him," said

Clavell simply.

"Then," her voice was low and clear and steady, "it was for me—a little, at least."

Clavell smiled suddenly.

"A little—even at first. And then—a great deal more. Martia, I didn't realise how much until to-day. But now——"

He knew, with pride in the knowledge, that she valued the honesty of that more than any protestation. He looked down at her gravely.

"And now, will you tell me why you let me believe that you cared for Ferguson?"

To which Martia replied with instant can-

"I thought it might show me if—if you cared. I wanted to find out."

"I see. And have you?"

The smile that curved her mouth held a quality that Clavell knew was for him alone. "I—I was wondering," she said.

MYSTERY.

COMETIMES when all the universe is still; When stars are burning on the quiet hill; When water moving in the darkness seems Like ghostly laughter, and a wild thing gleams From shadow into shadow and is gone, Leaving the midnight secrecy alone; Then in my heart a voice unbidden calls, As sudden, far-off mountain music falls In breaking wonder. And I am perplexed. Is it some restless being I have vexed In a loose-passioned moment? Or the cry Of some imprisoned thing about to die At my unconscious hand which kills at last? Or is it a despairing message cast Across all space—like a flung meteorite Hurled out along the cavern of the night-By some kin spirit crying down from far And bitter exile on another star? JAMES PARISH.

Car & Countryside

Things to see when Motoring

Though so much is being done to spoil our lovely countryside, there are still innumerable objects and places of interest within easy reach of every great city. The following is the third of a series of articles designed to suggest new trains of thought and experience to motorists and others who are willing to forsake the familiar and often monotonous main and arterial roads in favour of the by-ways.

III.—THE HARDY COUNTRY

By CLIVE HOLLAND

● (Photographs by the Author) ●

ESSEX, the Land of Thomas Hardy, was one of the Kingdoms of Saxon England. It had, however, long disappeared from the map when his genius recreated it and made this exquisite countryside—as yet largely unspoiled

by modern inno vations—a reality to English speaking readers throughout the world.

In these days of cars more and more people visit the region, but there are still many beauty spots comparatively unknown, with a variety of scenery that never palls.

The Wessex coastline begins with the sandy beaches of Bournemouth and the Hampshire border-

land, and runs to great cliffs of chalk as far as Swanage Bay, then turns to rocky headlands, then to chalk again, then to Portland stone, and last to that wonderful expanse of pebbly shore known as Chesil Beach.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, DORCHESTER.
Building with clock, where Thomas Hardy was educated.

Inland is a like variety. Down-like and breezy uplands skirting the coast and stretching along it: beautiful valleys and leafy woodlands, with Cranborne Chase, "The Chase," like a patch of the Hampshire New Forest gone astray, which Hardy in Tess of the D'Urbervilles describes as "a truly venerable tract of forest-land, one of the few remaining



WOOL ("WELLBRIDGE") MANOR HOUSE.

Once the home of the D'Urbervilles.

woodlands in England of undoubted primeval date, wherein Druidical mistletoe (is)

still found on aged oaks...." Then, too, there are charmingly picturesque villages, tucked away almost unsuspected in real beauty spots; towns so ancient that history scarcely records their beginnings; and scaports with many connecting links with our island story.

An excellent route from London to this area of rural England—Midlanders can make for Reading and easily join the road to Wessex at Winchester—is to Basingstoke, Winchester, in which old-city Tess met with her tragic end, Romsey, down the valley of the Test, thence to Downton, and to Salisbury, the "Melchester" of Jude the Obscure,

with its wonderful Cathedral spire, the highest in England.

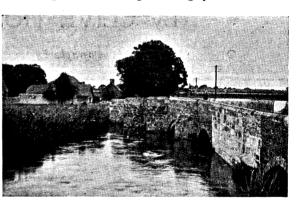


WAREHAM (" ANGLEBURY ") CHURCH AND QUAY.

The motorist is now on the northern border of the Hardy Country, and can, through delightful country, strike right down to the capital of Wessex, Dorchester, the "Casterbridge" of the novels, passing beneath the shadow of the lofty chalk downs.

At first one skirts Combe Down to Combe Bissett, whence there is a fairly steep climb up to the crest of the down at New Farm, some 600 feet above sea-level, commanding a wonderful view. The road, lonely but interesting, runs on through Drove End, Woodyates, and Handley, thence through beautiful Cranborne Chase to Winklebury, and so to Shaftes-

bury ("Shaston"), a charming old-world place which figures largely in Jude the



THE OLD BRIDGE AT WOOL.

Over this the spectral coach of the D'Urbervilles is said to pass at Christmas-time.

Obscure and also in Tess. One sees this strange hill-town long before one reaches it.

It seems to be one of the most remote little places in the South of England, though it is but three or four miles from a railway station. To the antiquary it is the most interesting town in the county.

The Romans came to Shaftesbury, and remains of their encampment are to be traced on Castle Hill. But to lovers of Hardy the chief attraction of the sleepy and picturesque town, with its charming atmosphere of ancient peace, will be its associations with Tess. Here the body of Edward the Martyr was brought after he had been slain by his stepmother

at the postern of Corfe Castle, and here King Canute died in 1035. Of the dozen churches of which the town could once boast, in addition to that of the Abbey, only St. Peter's remains. But this is worth seeing for the stained glass, fine parapet of the north aisle, and carvings.

Marnhull, the "Marlot" of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, lies five miles south-west of Shaftesbury. It was the home of her family and is a pleasant typically Wessex village, with a fine eighteenth-century church.

By going still southward to Sturminster Newton ("Stourcastle") one gets at least a glimpse of the beautiful



OLD GROVE PLACE, SHAFTESBURY ("SHASTON").

Blackmoor Vale, once somewhat strangely known by a quite different name, that of

the Forest of the White Hart, a name commemorating the fact that Henry III laid the district under a perpetual fine because of the killing, by a gentleman, of a beautiful white hart.

The road to Blandford ("Shottsford Forum") is a pretty one leading through several picturesque villages including Shillingstone and Durweston. If the direct road from Shaftesbury is taken one passes through Fontmell Magna. There is a may-



A WINCHESTER STREET.

pole on the green, and the thatched cottages nestling near the brook are lovely, while the "Gossips' Tree," with its rus-

the "Gossips' Tree," with its rustic seat, is a delightful reminder of less strenuous days.

Our road now lies beneath the shadow of Hod Hill (471 feet), to the left, and Hambledon Hill (623 feet). We are soon in Blandford, which was a manor of Brian de Insula or de Lisle in the reign of King John, and in the Middle Ages a town of size and importance. It was here that Henchard bought the goldfinch for Elizabeth Jane as recounted in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

The Dorchester road takes one through Winterborne Whitechurch, and Milborne St. Andrew, the "Millpond St. Jude" of Far from the Madding Crowd. Here is an

interesting church with a fine canopied tomb to the nephew of the great priest and



PUDDLETOWN (" WEATHERBURY ") MAIN STREET.

statesman, Cardinal Morton. Thence one passes Warren Hill on the left, and through Puddletown ("Weatherbury") with its interesting church, effigies to the Athelhampton Martins, and musicians' gallery. Athelhampton House, a traditional manor of Athelstan, is worth seeing. It consists mainly of Tudor domestic architecture, though portions date back to Edward III. Permission to view is seldom refused to students or visitors seriously interested. Puddletown

A GLADE IN CRANBORNE CHASE.

street and its house with the great bay window of Georgian times is picturesque.

The village brings back to Hardy lovers scenes in Far from the Madding Crowd; and in the Valley of the Frome or of the Great Dairies one recalls Hardy's lines:—

"Let me enjoy the earth no less Because the all-enacting might, That fashioned forth its loveliness, Had other aims than my delight."

One catches a glimpse of Dorchester in the distance, with Fordington on the high ground above the Frome, as one approaches it through a stretch of water-meadows, and over the ancient stone bridge. Fordington's jumbled roofs are usually made the more engaging by the blue-grey smoke that seems always to be drifting across them.

At Dorchester, the "Casterbridge" of Hardy, one is truly in the heart of Wessex. It is a charming old town with long streets running north, south, east, and west, along which in bygone days coaches used to gallop

> and sway on their way to that distant London of which many of the inhabitants "had only heard tell."

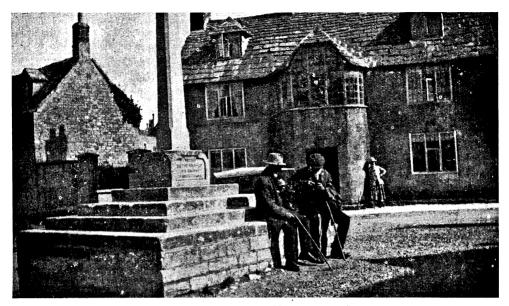
Lovers of Hardy's books will easily identify a number of places mentioned in them. There is the Grammar School at which he received most of his education, founded in 1579 by another Thomas Hardy; the Napper's Almshouses, founded in 1615; the fine Perpendicular Church of St. Peter; and the lodgings of the infamous Judge Jeffreys, in High West Street, where he stayed when conducting "Bloody Assize."

On market-days one can still meet with some of the "fine old crusted characters" Hardy drew so intimately and so well, and the types drawn by him in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* still persist notwithstanding the passage of the years, and the—in Wessex—slowly changing conditions.

Maumbury Rings are just outside the town, as is

"Max Gate," Hardy's old home, and the thatched cottage at Upper Bockhampton where he was born.

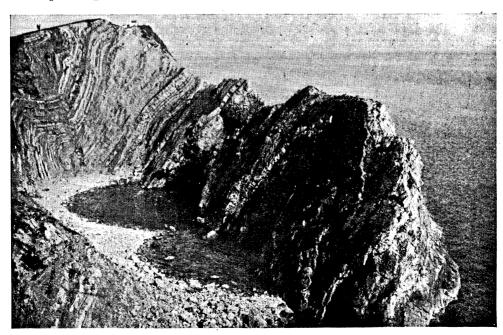
Dorchester is an excellent centre from which thoroughly to explore the Hardy Country. One can easily go south to Weymouth, the "Budmouth Regis" of that fine and stirring romance The Trumpet Major. Just across the water is that unique peninsula, the Isle of Portland, which Hardy named "the Isle of Slingers," where the principal scenes in the most elusive of his



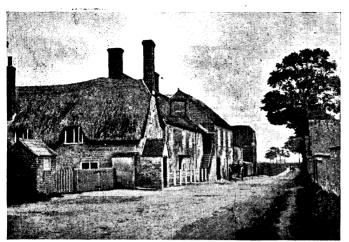
AT THE CROSS, CORFE (" CORVSGATE ").

romances, The Well-Beloved, are laid. There it is, in The Trumpet Major, that Anne Garland is described as standing to watch the sails of the Victory disappear below the wide horizon bearing Robert Loveday, her lover, away to fight at Trafalgar.

Near by is Abbotsbury, well worth visiting. It is a picturesque village, and Abbotsbury Castle, one of the seats of the Earl of Ilchester, is famous for its swannery and beautiful sub-tropical gardens. One returns towards Weymouth as far as Upwey, where there is a pretty "Wishing Well" much frequented in former days by the romantic, by reason of the legend that those who drank its water would have their wishes granted.



CONTORTED COAST AT LULWORTH.



MARNHULL (" MARLOT").

The home of Tess and her family.

From Weymouth to Bridport the road is good but hilly, and there is a very steep descent, almost dangerous, as one nears the town, which, notwithstanding its name, lies nearly a couple of miles from the sea. It is the scene, as "Port Bredy," of "Fellow Townsmen" in the Wessex Tales, and in The Mayor of Casterbridge. Once it was an important town, and in the reign of Henry VIII most of the cordage for the ships of the Royal Navy was made here. It was the scene of a skirmish, on June 14, 1685, during the Monmouth Rebellion. The spot is still pointed out in the Market-Place

where the gallows was erected to hang twelve unhappy followers of the ill-starred Duke.

The country round about is pretty and hilly, and from the higher ground are fine views of West Bay.

One reaches Beaminster by the high-road running north, or the tour can be extended in a westerly direction to Lyme Regis on the borders of Devon.

Beaminster, the "Emminster" of Tess, is, to use Hardy's own phrase, "a hill-surrounded little town." Like Blandford, it has suffered from great fires, and was almost destroyed when occupied by the Royalists during the Civil War. A few miles out of Beaminster westward are two famous hills, Lewesdon Hill (900 feet) and Pilsdon Hill (909 feet). This is the highest land in Dorset, and forms

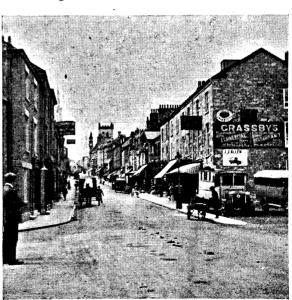
a great ridge. Naturally, many of the roads hereabouts have steep gradients, and careful driving is advisable.

One goes by a delightful road to Evershot ("Evershead"), which stands on the water-shed of southwestern England, with its streams flowing in one direction into the Bristol Channel, and in the other into the English Channel.

One must test the beauty of the country further by going northward to Yeovil ("Ivell"). There is little in the town to detain one, but much in the neighbourhood

is picturesque and interesting. The fircrowned hill of Montacute, which gives its name to a fine Tudor mansion, is a prominent landmark for miles around.

Sherborne ("Sherton Abbas") is a typically English country town. Once it was the second (if not the first) city in Wessex. Its Abbey Church is famous, and almost of the dimensions and importance architecturally of a cathedral, and for nearly four centuries it was the seat of a bishopric. The town has only two principal streets, and one bears the ancient name of Cheap. It figures several times in *The Woodlanders*.



HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER.

One returns to Dorchester through Cerne Abbas, the "Abbots Cernel" of *Tess*. Above the pleasant little village stands the well-known "Giant," 180 feet in height, bearing a club in his hand.

From Dorchester the car is turned homewards. The road lies through what are known as the "Puddle" villages, through and above the valley of the Trent and of the Frome, or of the Great Dairies, to Bere Regis, the "Kingsbere" of Tess and Far from the Madding Crowd. It is a picturesque old village, with a long straggling

street, and a fine church, with the D'Urberville vault and a window containing the family arms.

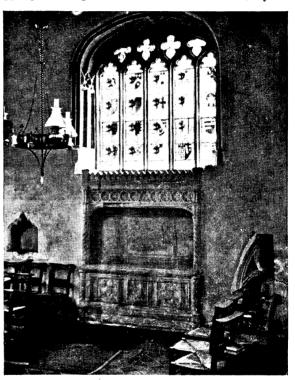
It was outside this window, in the churchyard, that Tess and her brothers and sisters camped in the famous four-post bedstead on the night they had come to the village in search of a new home.

Now one goes southward across Bere Heath, the famous "Egdon" Heath of Hardy, a wild stretch of moorland, with groups of windscarred and scattered pines, heather and gorse-clad, by a narrow winding road. Descending from the Heath one comes almost at once to Wellbridge Manor House at Wool, where Tess spent her brief and tragic honeymoon, and the old fifteenth-century bridge of stone, over which, on Christmas Eve, it is said that the spectral coach of a wicked D'Urberville passes. It can be seen only by those with the blood of the D'Urbervilles in their veins. Bindon Abbey ruins are close by, with the long-dead Abbot's stone coffin in which Angel Clare placed Tess still to be seen exactly as Hardy describes it.

The road to Wareham, the "Anglebury" of the novels, runs along the side of the valley of the Frome, which joins the Trent at Wareham.

Wareham has its ancient Saxon Church of St. Martin's, fragments of the town walls of long ago, and gives fine views of the Purbeck Hills. One can go on to Corfe Castle, placed on a mound in a gap between the hills, the "Corvsgate Castle" of *The Hand of Ethelberta*. Thence to the pleasant seaside resort of Swanage, or "Knollsea." Then on to Bournemouth ("Sandbourne") by way of Hamworthy and Poole ("Havenpool"). The great seaside resort was the scene of the murder of Alec D'Urberville by Tess, and the flight to the New Forest.

Back to town by way of Christchurch, through the beautiful New Forest, Lynd-



THE D'URBERVILLE WINDOW IN BERE REGIS ("KINGSBERE") CHURCH.

hurst, Romsey, Winchester, Basingstoke and Kingston.

As a general rule, the roads are good, and motorists who follow the tour roughly sketched will have seen nearly the whole of Hardy's "Wessex."

The next issue will contain an article on the ROMAN WALL, of special interest to motorists and others whose holiday journeys take them through the Borderland.



[Sport and General.

TROOPING THE COLOUR ON THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

THE KING'S GUARDS

By MAJOR J. T. GORMAN

In those ancient pageants and ceremonies which make the Court of St. James unique among European Governments the most picturesque parts are played by the Sovereign's Guards—corps whose duty and privilege it is to protect the Royal Person and whose traditions date back for centuries and are of the greatest historical interest.

Until Tudor days the English kings had a body guard chosen anew at the beginning of each reign from among the new monarch's own servants. These Body Guards bore various names, such as the "Crossbowmen of the Household," or "Archers of the Guard of the King's Body," but it was Henry VIII, in the resplendent youth of his accession, who decided to form a permanent guard, a. "Retineue of Speres, of Men of Arms, to be chosen of Gentlemen that be extracte of Noble Blood."

It is this corps which still bears the proud

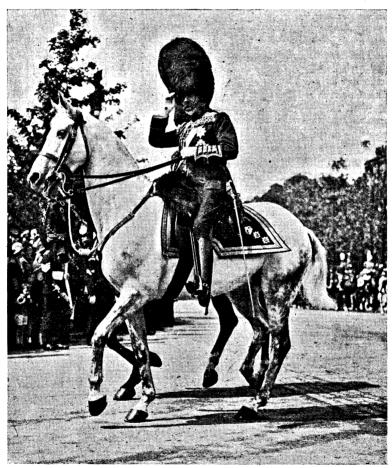
title of "Nearest Guard of the Sovereign and the principal military Corps of his Household."

Clad in the Tudor colours of green and white, mounted on great horses, and carrying the weapon which earned them the name of "Gentlemen of the Axe," they were a splendid guard of youth for a youthful King, and Holinshed, the historian, speaks of these "tall and comely personages" who seemed able "to give the greatest Prince in Christendom a mortal breakfast, if he were the King's enemy."

The new Guard, called for long "The Gentlemen Pensioners," distinguished themselves at the siege of Boulogne. Their establishment of fifty has been maintained, almost unchanged, to the present day, and they still carry the battle-axes with which they were first armed. There is a legend, indeed, that the present weapon is a copy of an axe captured from the Spanish Armada.

One of their officials is still called the Axekeeper, and he performs the duty of carrying the axes to the posts of the Gentlemen-at-Arms

The Body Guard played a very gallant part in the tragic glories of the Civil War. They attended King Charles at Oxford, and fought round him at Edge Hill, where his standard was captured and recaptured, and character was somewhat changed. It was William IV who made it once more a purely military body, to which none is admitted but officers who have seen active service in the field and received a decoration. King William also changed the title to that which is borne to-day, "His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms."



[Sport and General.

HIS MAIESTY ON HIS BEAUTIFUL WHITE CHARGER.

where Pensioner Miles Matthews saved His Majesty's life.

A century later it appeared possible that the Gentlemen Pensioners would be needed again in battle, when, in '45, the Young Pretender advanced to Derby, and King George warned the "Gentlemen of the Band" to be ready when he should set up his standard on Finchley Common.

But the crisis passed. For a time civilians were admitted to the corps, and its

Queen Victoria confirmed their privileges, among them the right of "attending the Sovereign in time of trouble as well as peace," and of being, at Coronations, "the guard nearest the Sovereign."

The scarlet and blue uniform now worn is like that of an officer of Heavy Cavalry in Early Victorian days. The badge of the corps is the portcullis, bestowed by Henry VIII.

The Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms

receives on appointment a Gold Stick from the King, and goes out of office with a change of Ministry. The Lieutenant and Clerk of the Cheque and Adjutant, who receive silver sticks of office from His Majesty, are, however, non-political appointments.

For long the Body Guard had a standardbearer but no standard, since that which they formerly guarded was no longer raised in the field. In 1909 King Edward VII pre-

sented a standard, which was worked by the wives of the Captains. This is only carried when they parade as a body, at the Opening of Parliament or at State receptions foreign potenof tates, not at Courts and Levees, although on these occasions the whole corps is on duty.

It is an interesting fact that only the two Body Guards of the Gentlemenat-Arms and the Yeomen of the Guard on duty in the Palace, together with the officer commanding the Guard of Honour, wear their headgear. is carried by everyone else, including the King himself.

"Valecti Garde (Corporis) Domine Regis"—Yeomen of the Guard (of our Body) of our Lord, the King—is the historic title of the

corps now known as the King's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard.

It is not only the oldest Royal Body Guard, but the most ancient military corps in any country, with an unbroken history of 443 years, since its foundation by Henry VII in 1485.

Formed by Henry Tudor from the "private guard of faithful followers" who surrounded him on Bosworth Field, the corps was actually created immediately after the battle.

After more than four centuries their dress is scarcely changed. The present uniform of the Yeomen is that of Tudor days, from the purple velvet be-ribboned hat to the shoes with their tri-coloured rosettes, from the gold-embroidered cross-belt, once used to support the harquebus, to the steel and gilt partisan which they carry on duty.

The Tudor dress was discontinued by the officers of the corps some hundred years ago,

and their uniform is that of the Foot Guards of 1830, with a cocked hat instead of a bearskin cap. The Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard receives a gold stick from the King on appointment, and the other officers silver sticks.

The establishment is at the strength fixed by Charles II: one hundred Yeomen, who are all exwarrant officers and N.C.O.'s of the Regular Army; Captain, a Lieutenant, an Ensign, a Clerk of the Cheque and Adjutant, with four Exons. last title is the French for "Exempt," and meant that, formerly, officers still serving were "exempted" from regular duty whilst with the Body Guard.

For three centuries the Yeomen of 'the Guard were responsible for the personal

safety of the Sovereign; for two centuries his servants as well as his guard. They tasted all food before the King ate; an officer slept outside the door of the royal chamber, and, each evening, was carried out the elaborate ceremonial of making the King's bed, first searching the straw of the mattress with a dagger, "that there be no untruth therein," and concluding by sprinkling the bed with holy water.

Although this ceremony has long been



[Lafayette.

HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS.



[W. Crooke.

ROYAL COMPANY OF ARCHERS, HIS MAJESTY'S BODY GUARD FOR SCOTLAND.

Full dress.

obsolete, the initials Y.B.G. (Yeoman Bedgoer) and Y.B.H. (Yeoman Bed-hanger) are still affixed to the names of certain Yeomen on the Roll.

The Yeomen served the King also in battle by land and sea. Under Henry VIII the Captain of the Guard commanded the Sovereign ship of war, with "60 of the tallest of the Guard" as his crew. They were with George II at Dettingen, the last time that a British king led an army in the field

Now the Yeomen live in their own homes, being summoned to the Palace for duty, but some of the old, quaint ceremonies are retained in which they play their parts.

The yearly search of the vaults of the Houses of Parliament still takes place, some two hours before the Opening, the Guard carrying lanterns and drawn swords. They still march in procession at the State Opening of Parliament, and take part in the beautiful ceremonials of the Epiphany Offerings in the Chapel Royal and the Maundy Gifts in Westminster Abbey. They

are also present as the only Body Guard at State Banquets, a survival of their old tasting and serving duties.

Attached to the Yeomen Body Guard, although a distinct body, are the Yeomen Warders of the Tower of London.

The Warders date back to the Conqueror's day, but it was in the reign of Edward VI that Protector Somerset, who had received kindly treatment during his imprisonment in the Tower, obtained for fifteen Warders the privilege of being sworn as "Yeomen Extraordinary of the Chamber" and of wearing uniforms like the Yeomen in Ordinary. This dress is still theirs, the distinction between them and the Body Guard



[W. Crooke.

ROYAL COMPANY OF ARCHERS.
Field uniform worn when on duty as King's
Body Guard.



THE KING'S MARSHALMEN.

[Vandyk.

being the absence of the cross-belt, which they have never worn.

The Chief Warden is Yeoman Porter and carries the King's Keys at the impressive nightly ceremony when the Tower gates are locked and the King's Keys saluted by the Guard.

No title has led to more controversy than

that of "Beefeater," by which both the Yeomen of the Body Guard and the Tower Warders are popularly known. It seems that the derivation from "Buffetier" is a myth, and that, probably, the name meant what it means now-just "Eaters of Beef." In successive centuries Prince Rupert and Horace Walpole referred to the Guard as "Beefeaters," and there is an Elizabethan mention of the "Queen's Beefs."

When the Sovereign crosses the Border, the duties of protecting the Royal Person are taken over by the King's Body Guard for Scotland, the Royal Company of Archers.

Although the Scottish Kings had a Body Guard, there is no unbroken record of this body, only died to the last man in defence of King James.

The Royal Company was organised in 1676, at the time when Charles II was reorganising the English Body Guards and

such outstanding stories as that of Flodden Field, where the Archer Guard

Queen Anne, at the time of the Union, gave the corps the right to call themselves the King's Company of Archers, to choose their own officers, make their own laws, carry colours and drums and march in military array. All this in consideration of the "Red-

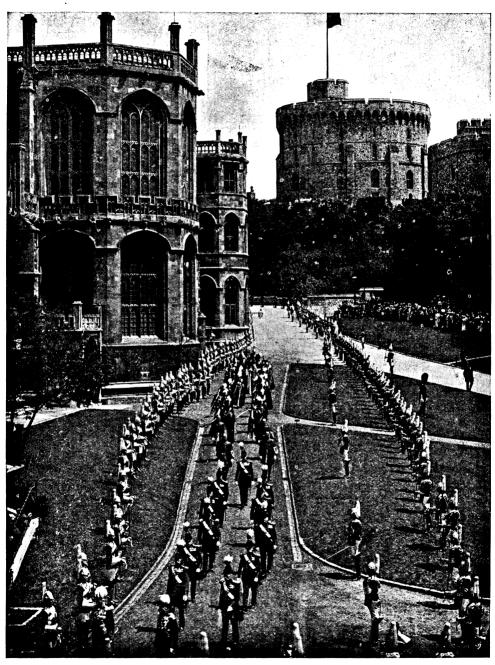
dendo," the pair (three) barbed arrows, which are still always presented to the Sovereign when visiting Edinburgh.

Army.

In 1822 the Royal Company of Archers petitioned George IV that they might act as his Body Guard in Scotland. The King granted the right, and, on his ensuing visit to Holyrood, the Company took precedence

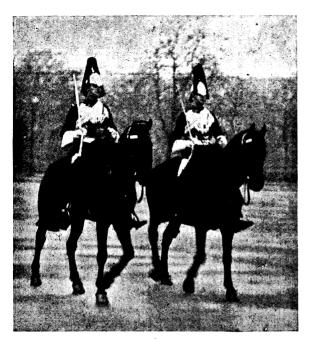


[Sport and General.



[Russell & Sons, Windsor.

THE MILITARY KNIGHTS OF WINDSOR, FOLLOWED BY HERALDS AND KNIGHTS OF THE GARTER.



TROOPERS, KING'S LIFE GUARD.

publicly in this capacity and have done so ever since. After the accession of William IV, the Gold Stick for Scotland was conferred by the King on the Captain-General of the Royal Company, and he has carried it ever since at all State functions in Scotland when the Scottish Body Guard have been in attendance.

No Body Guard uniform is more picturesque than that of the Royal Company of Archers, especially, perhaps, the green field dress, which is always worn when on duty as the Royal Body Guard, with the bonnet bearing a single eagle's feather, and the green cloth bow-case which each archer carries, together with a bow and a pair of arrows.

There are about four hundred members of the King's Body Guard for Scotland, which is organised on a strictly military basis. Of these, the great majority have seen active service as commissioned officers in the Regular Army.

Between the Palace Body Guards and the Household Cavalry one high official forms, as it were, a kind of link.

This is Gold Stick, the representative of the Household Cavalry, appointed by Charles II as the personal protector of the King. This post is held by the three Colonels of the Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards, and, in rotation, for a month at a time, they are the Gold-Stick-in-Waiting, responsible not only for the King's person, but for the part taken by the Household Cavalry in all military Court ceremonies.

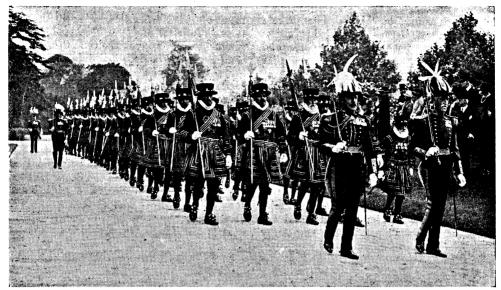
We have seen that a Gold Stick, as badge of office, is also given by the King to the Captains of the Yeomen of the Guard, the Gentlemen-at-Arms, and the Body Guard for Scotland. It was especially laid down that the institution of Gold Stick did not interfere with the privileges of the Captains of the Body Guards. At State ceremonies they walk just in front of the Sovereign, and the Gold Stick walks immediately in rear of the Captains of the Body Guards.

Gold Stick has two assistants in his office when in Waiting—Silver Stick and Silver Stick Adjutant who are also officers of the Household Cavalry.

Whilst the Body Guards within the Royal Palaces are compara-



A FAMILIAR LONDON FIGURE.

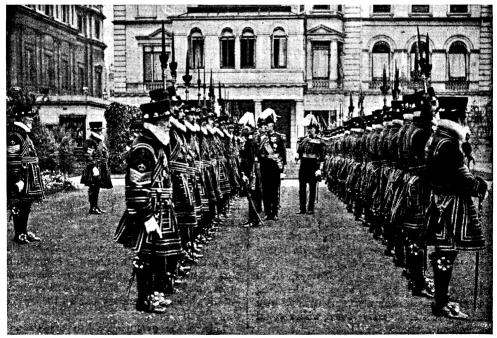


[Central Press.

YEOMEN OF THE GUARD.

tively rarely seen, the Household Troops, both Horse and Foot, are a very vital part of the life of London. The mounted sentries at Whitehall are probably two of the best-known military figures in the world, whether they wear the scarlet coat and white plumes of the Life Guards, or the crimson plumes and dark-blue tunics of the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues).

Their appearance would be even more gorgeous if they wore their original garb of Restoration days—the coats of fine, scarlet



[Central Press.

YEOMEN OF THE GUARD: AN INSPECTION.

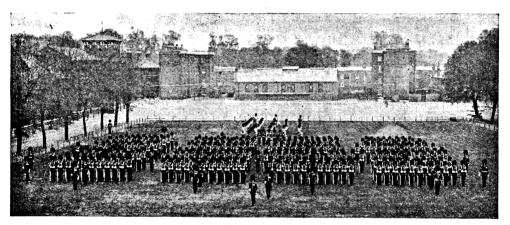
cloth, the cloaks of crimson velvet, the black hats, with knots of "broad blue taffeta ribband," and if their dignified chargers had, as then, their manes, cruppers and tails garnished with large knots of the same blue ribbon.

The Life Guards and the Horse Guards—the only two regiments of veritable "Horse" left in the British Army—owe their present dress to George IV, who reintroduced the helmet, cuirass and jack-boots. He also added several inches to the bearskins of the Foot Guards, so that it was necessary to increase the height of the sentry-boxes at St. James's to accommodate them.

The Life Guards and the Grenadier Guards, the Royal Horse Guards and the Coldstream were all part of the new Army "Mr.," since they were the "King's Regiment of Private Gentlemen," still use the term "Corporal of Horse" instead of Sergeant, and, through their representative Gold-Stick-in-Waiting, maintain their privilege of being the only armed troops intended for service inside the doors of the Palace

Their daily Guard Mounting at White-hall, together with the mounting of the Foot Guards at Buckingham Palace and St. James's, is a never-failing attraction to Londoners and visitors alike. A writer in 1794 speaks of the "Beauty of the Scene and the Dignity of the fine Martial Musick," and tells of the crowds who flocked to see the ceremony; the same is true to-day.

It is the King's Guard which mounts at



THE FIRST BATTALION IRISH GUARDS ON PARADE.

of Charles II, the two first being formed preponderantly from Cavalier troops, the latter from the "New Model" of Cromwell, thus reconciling the two parties of the Civil War.

The Scots Guards belong to almost the same period, but came to England for the first time to join James II's camp at Hounslow.

The Irish Guards were formed by Queen Victoria after the Boer War to commemorate Irish gallantry in South Africa. The Welsh Guards came into being in the Great War, thus making the Household Brigade representative of the British Isles.

These are the Household Troops, those whose especial duty it is to guard the King and the Palaces, each regiment with its own history, traditions and customs, which would fill volumes.

The Household Cavalry, who, until recently, were mustered under the term of

Buckingham Palace; the King's Life Guard which takes over the daily duty at Whitehall, that is, whenever the King is in his capital. At other times the ceremony is shorn of much of its beauty, for the King's Colour and the King's Standard are not carried by Foot and Horse respectively.

In earlier times the daily Guard Mounting took place on the Horse Guards Parade, and during May each year the custom is revived, being preceded by "Trooping the Colour."

"Trooping the Colour" on the King's Birthday is a crowded ceremony, for the few; the many can witness the same function any early May morning in the same place, and with one striking and historic detail which does not appear at the Birthday Parade.

This is the evolution when officers and N.C.O.'s move across the Parade Ground on the order, "To your Guards,—Slow—

March!" Tradition has it that this custom was invented two centuries ago, to test the early-morning sobriety of Guards' officers, for no one with the least unsteadiness of gait could keep that slow bee-line across the Parade.

These ceremonies of the King's Guards reach a climax in the great pageant of His Majesty's Birthday Parade, when the massed Guards "Troop" the King's Colour to the fine, traditional strains of the "Grenadier's March," march past the King at the Saluting Point, and finally follow him from the Parade, the King placing himself at the head of his own Guard, and leading the troops to Buckingham Palace, where the King's Guard is mounted.

As Gold Stick stands for the Household Cavalry in the Royal Palaces, so the Foot Guards are represented by the Field Officer in Brigade Waiting, who is in charge of all military arrangements at Court ceremonies, except as regards the Household Cavalry.

The Regimental Lieutenant-Colonels and the Battalion Commanding Officers of the Household Brigade, when in London, act in turn for a month at a time as Field Officer in Brigade Waiting. "Waiting," it is interesting to note, is the term applied to all grades in attendance on the King. In the Guards, for instance, the Drill Sergeant on duty would be called Drill Sergeant-in-Waiting.

The Field Officer in Brigade Waiting is responsible for Guards of Honour and attends the Sovereign on all State occasions, riding in one of the Royal carriages.

He takes command of all the troops at the King's Birthday Parade, and, in the event of such an occurrence as a fire or riot at either of the Palaces, he would command the troops until the arrival of the General Officer Commanding.

When the ceremony of Guard Mounting takes place at Buckingham Palace a stalwart figure, in a somewhat old-world uniform and shako, appears in front of the Palace Gates, baton in hand, and waits there until the function concludes. This individual, in scarlet coat or dark-blue caped cloak, with a short sword, black-

scabbarded, with a crimson and gold knot, is a King's Marshalman.

One of the Marshalmen comes on duty daily at the Guard Mounting and remains on duty until four o'clock, or until the House of Lords rises, for, when the Lords are sitting, two Marshalmen are always on duty at the House, with their batons, which bear both the Royal Arms and those of Westminster.

The Marshalmen in olden days were the under-officers of the Knight Marshal and of the Court of Verge, which had jurisdiction over an area of twelve miles "counted from the King's Lodging." The office of Knight Marshal was abolished nearly a century ago, but the Marshalmen remained to carry out certain duties about the Palace, where they were responsible for good order, and for "the exclusion of Boys and Vile Persons."

The Marshalmen are all ex-soldiers and generally ex-Guardsmen. The present Senior Marshalman is an ex-Drill-Sergeant of the Coldstream Guards.

This account of the King's Guards would not be complete without mention of that venerable and picturesque body of veteran officers, the Military Knights of Windsor.

Older even in date than the others we have mentioned, their origin dates back to 1349, and their connection with the Order of the Garter is shown by the star on their buttons.

Their badge is even older—the oldest of all our national badges—the arms of St. George of England, borne by no other military body. Their present uniform, that of a staff officer, is almost the same as that given by William IV.

All of them soldiers, officers who have served the King in past wars, it is fine and fitting that, even now, from their quiet retreat at Windsor, in the shadow of the great Castle which saw the founding of the Order of the Garter, they should serve as a Guard of Honour to the King on certain occasions.

Thus all ages, the oldest of the veteran Knights and the youngest of the newly joined Guardsmen, share in the duty and honour of protecting their Sovereign.



THE FIRST DAY

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

• ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

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HE boy sat in the lounge of the hotel. He had arrived only the night before and he did not know anyone. It was the first time in his life that he had ever been away on a holiday alone. The doctor had decreed a week by the sea after an attack of mumps, and, as it happened, none of the boy's family could come away with him. His mother and father had discussed the matter together, and had decided that seventeen was not too young to stay at a hotel by yourself (they decided on a hotel rather than rooms because they wanted to be sure that the boy had good food, and with landladies you never know), and so the boy had come away, feeling intensely important and grown up. This feeling, however, had gradually disappeared during the journey, and last night when he arrived at the hotel he had felt indescribably young and shy and miserable. He clung desperately to a wholly mistaken conviction that he looked older than he really was . . . quite five years older. He had (he knew because he examined it carefully every morning) distinct traces of a moustache. His only fear -and it was a quite justifiable fear-was lest the traces were such as not to be visible to the casual observer. It was a fair moustache (or rather it was going to be a fair moustache), and that was annoying because dark moustaches show up so much better and aren't so easily overlooked. There has to be so much more of a fair one before it really begins to look like a moustache. When the boy stood in front of his lookingglass, stern and frowning, in a light that showed his incipient moustache, he looked to his own eyes twenty-five at least, but when a few minutes later he'd catch an unexpected glimpse of himself at an unexpected angle in an unexpected looking-glass, the extreme youthfulness of it, without the composed expression of severity and thoughtfulness, would depress him horribly.

His arrival yesterday had been a most terribly embarrassing affair. It had been

dreadful walking through the crowded lounge behind the porter with everyone staring at Just for one minute he'd found it in his heart to wish that he'd died of mumps, although he wasn't sure, when he came to think about it, whether you could die of mumps. Still there must be complications of it you could die of, and he'd wished for just that moment he'd had one of them. had been better when he changed into evening dress, because he could not help rather admiring himself in evening dress. His evening clothes were such a recent acquisition, and he was still so proud of them. . . . He imagined that they put ten years at least on to his age. . . . But it had been terrible again sitting at a table all by himself at dinner with everyone staring at him (at least he imagined that everyone was staring at him. He daren't look at them to make sure). He'd felt so horribly self-conscious. and so horribly conscious that he looked self-conscious, that he'd eaten hardly anything.

After dinner he noticed that most of the young people went down into a basement room whence he heard the sound of dance music and laughter. He was too shy to go down with them, and, once they'd gone, the thought of making a solitary and conspicuous entrance was of course not to be contemplated. He sat in the lounge for a few minutes pretending to read letters with a thoughtful frown (the frown he used to practise in the looking-glass and which made him look so mature), and then went to bed.

The next morning it was pouring with rain. That was unfortunate, because the boy had put on his plus-fours, meaning to play golf. He was still suffering from acute self-consciousness. When he'd put on his plus-fours in his bedroom he'd had a horrible suspicion that they were too baggy, but now that he was in the lounge where other men were wearing plus-fours he had an equally horrible suspicion that they weren't baggy enough. He couldn't, how-

ever, help rather liking his brogues. They were new and very ornate.

Alternately he longed for someone to speak to him, and was in a panic of terror lest anyone should. One of the writing tables was empty, so he went over to it to write a letter. It was less embarrassing than just sitting and doing nothing. He hadn't a book or a morning paper. . . . Still intensely conscious of the imagined scrutiny of the room, he sat for some minutes frowning and fingering his imaginary moustache as though the letter he was about to write were one of momentous importance. Then he wrote:—

DEAR MUMMIE,-

I got here all right last night. It is a very nice place. Of course I don't know anyone yet. I find that I didn't bring my tonic, but don't send it. I can get another bottle here. It's raining so hard this morning that it's not worth while going out. There seem to be some very nice people here, but of course I don't know any of them yet. Give my love to everyone. Don't let them overfeed Rex.

Your loving son, CHARLES ANTHONY MOSTYN.

The boy signed his name slowly and with satisfaction. He liked his name in full. It sounded dignified and mature. He'd tried lately to get people to call him Anthony instead of Tony, but nobody would. . . . He hadn't a stamp, so he folded the letter, put it into his pocket-book, and went back to his seat. It was hateful to sit like this, doing nothing. He searched feverishly through his pockets, and at last found a letter which he drew out and began to study with every appearance of intense interest and deep thought. It was, as a matter of fact, a letter which he had received from his younger brother several weeks ago, and which he had not known was in his pocket. It contained descriptions of a house match and a dormitory rag. He read and re-read this with a frown, sometimes looking away from it at the floor or at the ceiling, obviously deep in speculation. Probably people were wondering about him-who he was and what he did. . . . Well, they'd have no doubt now, thought the boy, that he was a business man. Some sort of magnate or financier. He was so obviously immersed in weighty calculations. To make the character more complete he took out a pencil and began to put down rows of figures on the envelope, which he then studied frowningly, his finger across his lips. This performance raised his spirits and self-esteem.

He felt equal to almost anything now. He ought to be getting to know people. One often read of "hotel acquaintances," but he didn't remember reading anywhere any account of how they were formed. Did people speak to you or did you speak to them?... And what did you say?

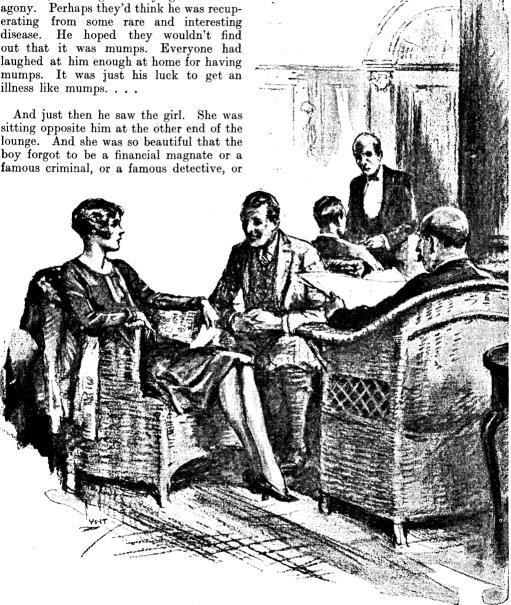
He noticed a big man with white hair at the other side of the lounge who seemed to be watching him. Perhaps he was going to speak to him. The boy assumed the pleasant tolerant expression of one who would not mind being spoken to. The big man rose, and began to walk across the room towards him. Panic overcame the boy. He took out his letter again and began to study it with scowling absorption. He prayed that the big man would not speak to him . . . he wished once more that he'd died of mumps. The dreadful moment passed. The big man walked past him. He had not been meaning to speak to him at all. He was merely going to the office to ask for his letters.

It was still pouring with rain. Groups of people stood about the room together discussing it. Everyone seemed to know everyone, thought the boy desolately, except him. Someone came into the lounge selling news-The boy bought one and turned with eager haste to the financial page. He did not understand the financial page, and he had never read it before, but his new character as a financial magnate had to be maintained. Frowning deeply and biting his lip, he skimmed the incomprehensible columns. Once or twice he nodded as if in approval and smiled slightly as if relieved. Then he took out his letter and put down a few more figures on the envelope. Then he turned over the next page and began to read the news. A man was wanted for a daring daylight robbery in the City. The boy was rather tired of being a financier. It would perhaps be better to be a criminal in hiding. He had come to the hotel because he thought no one here would know him. He assumed a frown, which he meant to be quite a different frown from the one he had worn as a financier, but which was really the same, and a hunted expression. Then he changed his mind and decided to be a great detective on the track of the daring criminal. shot a keen hawklike glance round the lounge, and met the gaze of two old ladies who were knitting scarves and looking at him as if they were talking about him. His face flamed in sudden embarrassment, and he took refuge in his letter again, coughing to

hide his nervousness. The cough sounded hollow, and made an awful noise. A middleaged lady on the next seat started and glanced at him in concern. The boy hastily assumed the expression of one suffering great pain. He put his hand on to his chest and moved his head, frowning as if trying to ease his agony. Perhaps they'd think he was recuperating from some rare and interesting disease. He hoped they wouldn't find out that it was mumps. Everyone had laughed at him enough at home for having mumps. It was just his luck to get an

And just then he saw the girl. She was sitting opposite him at the other end of the lounge. And she was so beautiful that the boy forgot to be a financial magnate or a

her two companions. The boy turned his attention to them. One was an elderly man who, the boy thought, must be her father. The boy only gave him a casual glance. He



even an invalid suffering from an interesting disease. He went crimson, and gazed at her ardently. When first he'd noticed her he could have sworn that she was looking at him, but as soon as he began to look at her she was apparently wholly occupied with was so old as to be negligible. About fifty at least. But the other—the boy quite unintentionally began to glare at the other with an expression of virulent hatred. He was young and handsome, and horribly well dressed. His plus-fours were baggier and

tweedier than the boy's. He looked self-possessed too—as if he'd be able to sit in a large room where nobody knew him and everyone was looking at him without having to pretend that he was a financier or a

at her like that. Was he—horrible, horrible thought—her fiancé? The boy rose and crossed the room to the window, where he stood very self-consciously as though watching the rain. From there he could



criminal or a detective or an invalid. The boy hated him. He began to speculate on his relations with the girl. He was pretty sure that he wasn't her brother. The boy had a sister, and he knew how one treated one's sister. One did not, for example, smile see her left hand . . . no, she wasn't wearing an engagement ring. He heaved a sigh of relief and walked back to his seat.

Then (for he was afraid that his progress through the room must have made people stare at him again) he assumed a ferocious frown, and, taking up his paper, plunged again headlong into the financial page. After about three minutes he emerged from it and looked round again cautiously. No one was looking at him. The old man was doing a cross-word puzzle on the back page of a newspaper, and the young man was talking to the girl. The more the boy looked at the young man the more he disliked him. He was one of those cocksure chaps who always get on so well with girls, thought the boy morosely . . . dark, with a moustache (a real thick, visible moustache) and a slight wave to his hair. The boy hated men who had slight waves to their hair. He supposed gloomily that he was as good as engaged to the girl, and the more he looked at the girl the more wonderful she seemed. He watched narrowly from behind his newspaper, and as he watched his spirits rose. He didn't believe that she did care for the man after all. He was sure that she didn't care for the man. She was looking bored. He was talking away to her, and she wasn't listening to a word. The boy's anger rose. Fancy talking on and on to a girl when she obviously didn't want to listen. The man had a harsh, grating voice, and the girl, of course, had the most beautiful voice in the world. Probably he was immensely wealthy, and the old man with the cross-word puzzles was encouraging his suit and trying to force the girl to marry him. During his illness the boy had read on an average five thrillers a day. He glared furiously at the young man. The young man seemed unaffected by his

Soon the three of them got up and went out of the lounge.

She passed quite close to him. She was far and away the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen.

It was still raining.

Most people had gone out now. Only a handful of old ladies sat about knitting mysterious contraptions of silk or wool, and talking to each other in whispers. A few old gentlemen dozed openly and unashamedly in squat armchairs.

The boy thought he might as well go out. He went slowly upstairs to fetch his mackintosh. He was still thinking about the girl—about her amazing beauty and the silvery sweetness of her voice and the blueness of her eyes, and the way her hair curled about her ears, and the way she walked and how wonderful she was altogether. Then—quite suddenly—he heard her voice. He was walking down a corridor and her voice came from a door which stood just ajar. He couldn't help it. He stood and listened. She was speaking in a quick, low voice.

"Why won't you leave me alone?" she wassaying. "I've told you I don't love you."

Then came the young man's voice, harsh

and grating.

"Remember that I've got evidence which will put your father into prison to-morrow."

Then the girl's voice:

"You mean that as a threat?"

Then the young man's:

"Most certainly—I'll give you till this

evening to make up your mind."

Then the boy thought that he heard footsteps coming to the door, so he hastened on down the corridor, his heart beating unevenly.

... So that was it! His whole being flamed with the zeal of the knight-errant. All right, he'd rescue her ... he'd do something (he wasn't sure what, yet) ... he'd put a spoke in that young man's wheel (he wasn't sure how yet). He put on his mackintosh, thrust on his hat, and went for a walk in the rain to think things out.

He wandered about the streets of the little seaside town till suddenly he caught sight of a figure walking parallel with him on the other side of the road. It was a vaguely familiar figure. He crossed over. Yes, he was right. It was the young man. The young man smiled.

"I say," he said, "you were in the lounge

at the hotel, weren't you?"

The boy admitted guardedly that he had been.

"Filthy day, isn't it?" said the young man.

The boy agreed, still guardedly, that it was.

"You here for long?" continued the young man.

The boy admitted that he was there for a week.

"Hateful place in the rain. You going for a walk?"

The boy admitted—still guardedly—that he was.

The young man suggested that they should go together, and the boy assented.

They walked on through the rain out of the town and up into the country. The young man talked a lot. He had views on all sorts of things. He knew exactly how the League of Nations ought to be reorganised, and what ought to be done to make coal pay. The boy said little—not that his silence was noticeable because the young man amply made up for it. On the surface the young man seemed innocent and well meaning enough. But the boy had not

beguiled the mumps by whole libraries of thrillers for nothing. He knew that all the best villains were guileless and well meaning on the surface, Churchwardens and J.P.'s and Presidents of Societies and Social Workers, and things like that. When the young man casually mentioned that he was secretary of his local cricket club at home he admitted his villainy to the boy as plainly as if he'd shown him the body of one of his victims. The old man, of course, was another of them—doing cross-word puzzles while all the time someone had evidence that would put him into prison. One of the very worst villains in the boy's thrillers had been fond of playing Halma in his spare hours. The boy, of course, following the example of the thrillers' heroes, pretended to be deceived by this surface innocence. He pretended to be duped by all this League of Nations and Miners' Federation nonsense. He did not mention the girl or the old man lest he should betray his interest in them and put the villain on his guard. No, he just agreed diplomatically with all the young man said about Germany and Austria and permanent seats and labour leaders and Royalties and all the rest of it, and waited till fate should open a way for him. Fate had always opened a way for the heroes of his thrillers.

It appeared that the young man was an architect, and when he'd quite finished with the League of Nations and the coal industry he began on architecture, and he'd as much to say about architecture as he'd had to say about the League of Nations and the coal industry. They were passing an empty house on the top of a hill. The young man stopped and began to talk about the house. Evidently a lot of things were wrong with He got quite excited. There were so many things wrong with it outside that the young man was sure that there must be as many things wrong with it inside. He enumerated a lot of things that he was quite sure were wrong with it inside. His excitement grew. He was determined to verify his suspicions. Followed by the boy, he went up to the front door. It was locked. He went round to the back door. It was locked. He went round the house and found a scullery window unlocked and climbed in, followed by the boy. He walked about the ground floor in a sort of intoxication of ecstasy, still followed by the boy. Everything that could possibly be wrong with it was wrong. He went upstairs into the bathroom, still followed by the boy. The bathroom was

all wrong. Everything in it was wrong. bath was put in wrong. The cistern was put in wrong. All the pipes were put in The floor was put in wrong. The ceiling was put in wrong. The walls were put in wrong. The window was put in The young man walked up and down talking about it . . . the boy stood at the door watching him. And suddenly it seemed to the boy that fate had opened a way for him. In the last thriller he had read—the one just before the doctor had let him get up—the hero had been in just this situation, alone with the villain in an upstairs room of an empty house. And he'd leapt out, slammed and locked the door, and left the villain there imprisoned in a lonely country spot. The boy reacted to his memory almost automatically. It was the work of a second to spring back, close and lock the door, the key, fortunately, being outside, hurry to the road, down the hill to the town, and back to the hotel.

His mind worked quickly. He'd heard the villain telling the girl that he'd give her till this evening. This evening then, unless she yielded, he'd hand her father over to the police. His imprisonment in the empty house would give them a few hours' respite. He'd tell the girl that he knew all, and the best thing would be to get her father out of the way, so that when the villain told the police they wouldn't be able to find himship him off to the Continent or the Colonies or somewhere. It must be quite easy. It was done regularly in books. And then, of course, eventually, when he was rich and powerful, he'd marry the girl and bring her father back from hiding and ruin the villain. They'd have to wait some time, of course, because he hadn't quite finished his college course yet-well, to be quite honest, he'd only just left school.

Neither the girl nor her father was in the lounge. That was rather baffling, because he'd no idea where to look for them. He thought that the best thing would be to stay in the lounge, because they'd be sure to come to the lounge sooner or later. Meanwhile he'd write a fresh letter to his mother and try to give her some idea of what was going on. He took the one he'd written earlier out of his pocket-book and tore it up. Then he wrote another:—

MY DEAR MOTHER,-

I arrived here quite safely last night. I cannot give you any details but the most extraordinary things are happening. I have found them out quite by chance. There is a man here who has a

hold over a very beautiful girl through her father, and is trying to force her to promise to marry him, through the hold he has over her father. He knows something about the father's past. I am doing what I can to help her. She is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. I will let you know when next I write how things turn out.

I didn't bring the tonic, but don't send it. I

will get it made up here.

Don't let them feed Rex at table.

Your loving son, CHARLES ANTHONY MOSTYN.

He still hadn't a stamp, so he slipped the letter into his pocket-book. Then he took another piece of notepaper and began to make up a poem to the girl. He was just

He made some sort of assent.

"You came last night, didn't you?" she said. "Why didn't you come down to dance?"

"I—I—er—couldn't," blushed the boy, indescribably confused by the nearness and radiance of the vision.

"I'd noticed you at dinner," she went on, "and I looked for you downstairs when we were dancing, but you weren't there."

"N-no," agreed the boy, everything else forgotten in a desperate struggle to control his colour, which he knew was deepening till it invaded his very errs. "N-no, I didn't go. I—I had important letters to write."



wondering what rhymed with "beauty" except "duty" when he looked up to find the girl standing on the other side of the writing-table. Their eyes met, and the boy's face flamed crimson. He scrunched up his unfinished poem and slid it into the wastepaper basket. She smiled at him. He gulped.

"Foul day, isn't it?" she said.

"What a lot of letters you write," said the girl. "You were writing them just after breakfast, and you're writing them again."

The boy became the great financier again, smiled gravely as those smile upon whom great responsibilities rest, and said nothing.

"You'll come down to-night, won't you?"

she went on. "It's quite a jolly floor a da very jolly crowd. And—do you play tennis?"

"Yes," said the boy.

"Well, there's a jolly covered tennis court



"'What a lot of letters you write,' said the girl."

in the town. I'll get two more and we'll have a foursome there to-morrow morning, shall we? Then we sometimes go to the Empire for thé dansant . . . and there's golf. Anyway, you'll get to know the crowd to-night after dinner, and we'll fix up things for to-morrow. You've not been here before, have you?"

"No," said the boy, "I'm supposed to be recovering from an illness." He assumed the expression of one suffering from a mys-

terious disease, and then added with a burst of honesty, "Mumps."

She was certainly the finest, noblest girl in the whole world. She didn't laugh at him as everyone else had laughed at him.

She said, "Oh, how hateful. I'm so sorry. I've had mumps, so I know... They're awfully painful, aren't they?"

It was the first time that anyone had taken his mumps seriously. The boy's heart swelled to bursting point.

"Can you act?" went on

the girl.

The boy considered that he acted very well (he had been one of the witches when his form had acted Macbeth). So he said deprecatingly:

"I-er-like acting."

"Then I'm sure you can act," said the girl. "People can always do things they like doing. We were getting up a little play for Saturday and the man who was taking one of the parts finds he's got to go home to-night, so could you take it on?"

"I—I'd like to awfully," said the boy, hoarse with eagerness

"Well, we ought to be having a rehearsal now—so come on."

Lightly he ran upstairs with her to a room on the first floor.

"It's the sitting-room of a private suite," explained the girl, "but it's not occupied, so the manager lets us rehearse in it."

Now, it's a terrible thing to have to confess about one's hero, but the heroine's smile had so demoralised him that he'd completely forgotten the fact that he'd left the villain imprisoned in an empty house at the top

of the hill. He'd forgotten everything but the fact that the girl was the loveliest and kindest and most intelligent girl he'd ever met in his life, and that she'd noticed him all the time and liked him. He forgot her criminal father and villainous lover and the terrible predicament that she was in. Of course, he should not have forgotten. Such is not the stuff of which real heroes are made, but the boy was, of course, rather an amateur at the game. . . .

"Here's your part," said the girl, "and you have the first scene with me.'

The rest of the cast—a very jolly crowd who made him feel at home at once-sat around, and the boy and the girl began to act their scene.

The boy read dramatically and with feeling till he got to the third page—then his jaw dropped open and his eyes bulged.

"Why won't you leave me alone?" read the girl. "I've told you that I don't love

you."

With a supreme effort the boy recovered himself and read tremblingly, "Remember that I've got evidence that will put your

father into prison to-morrow."

"I think you ought to sound more threatening there," said the girl. "You sound moved, but I think you should sound threatening. . . . You mean that as a threat?"

The boy gulped, and again continued only

by a great effort.

"Most certainly. I'll give you till this

evening to make up your mind."

As in a dream, the boy got to the end of the scene. The others went out. stayed to collect her things. The boy stayed with her.

"I say," said the boy, "d-did you have a

rehearsal of this this morning?"

"Yes . . . why?"

"Who-who took the part I've just taken?"

"Oh, my brother-in-law. He's been with us, but he's going to-night. Haven't you noticed him? He's a most dreadful bore. I oughtn't to say so, but I'm awfully glad he's going. . . . He's had some business to see to in the town, so he's been staying with us here, and it's finished sooner than he thought it would be, so he's going home to-night. Why?"

And the boy told her everything. He told her everything because he knew that she'd hear everything sooner or later through her brother-in-law, and he wanted to get his tale in first. And she didn't laugh at him as an ordinary girl would have done. She clasped her hands and looked at him with eyes bright with hero-worship.

"But I think it was wonderful of you,"

she said, "wonderful."

The boy's heart swelled, but just at that minute the brother-in-law burst in, dishevelled and covered with dust and rust from sliding down a drain-pipe outside the house. The boy's heart at once ceased its swelling, deflated itself to half its normal size, and slid down to his new and very

ornate brogues. But the brother-in-law was less angry than might have been expected, because while sliding down the drain-pipe he'd noted a flaw in the construction of the front of the house that otherwise he might have missed, and he'd composed a very convincing and eloquent letter to the local paper about it on the way home. At the end of his narration he looked at the boy severely and said:

" Next time you want to try to be funny,

my lad, wait till the 1st of April."

The boy flushed and blinked and the girl looked demure. Neither of them said anything. . . . The man went out.

When he had gone the girl said:

"He's going before dinner. Will you sit at our table? Daddy would love it. He gets awfully bored with only me. Will you?"

"I-I'd like to awfully," said the boy, his face flaring with ecstasy, and added huskily, "But are you sure you wouldn't mind?"

"I'd like it," said the girl. "I'll tell Daddy to speak to the head waiter. looked so lonely last night."

The boy came down rather early before dinner. The lounge was empty. He looked at his reflection in the full-length glass on the wall, and thought with great satisfaction that in his dress-suit he looked well over twenty. Perhaps the events of the day had aged him. He was glad the brother-in-law had gone. He'd have hated that tale to get about. He was sure that the girl wouldn't tell anyone. She was so unlike any other girl, so wonderful in every way.

There was about a quarter of an hour before dinner. Just nice time to write to his mother. He sat down at a writingtable, took the last letter he had written out of his pocket-book and tore it up. Then he wrote again:-

DARLING MUMMIE,-

I got here quite safely last night. I'm sorry I didn't write earlier but I hadn't a stamp. find now that you can buy them in the hall. This is an awfully nice place and everyone is awfully kind and jolly. I have already met some awfully jolly people. There is a girl whom I'm sure you would like. She's so jolly and frightfully pretty. She and I and some other people are acting in a play on Saturday. There's dancing here every evening and I am going to play tennis and golf with some people here to-morrow. I think I'm going to enjoy my week here awfully.
I'm afraid I forgot to pack my tonic, but don't

send it. I'll get a bottle of it made up here. Keep

an eye on old Rex for me, won't you?

Lots of love to everyone, TONY.

FIRE ELEMENTAL

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

HE big room seemed to be fashioned in the workshop of the four ele-Windows facing north, south, and east, framed rival stretches of sea, and brown, high-crested hills. The winds of Heaven blew through the open casements, persistent and intrusive. was present in a wide open hearth that stretched well across the west wall. It was a room that suggested elemental things. You were encompassed by earth, air, fire,

Old Henry Marsforth sat perpetually in the ingle, watching the fire, stooping to hold stiff rheumatic hands to the heat, revelling in the comradeship of crackling wood and glowing coal. It was heat, colour, sound -a medley of companionable things. Wind, hills, and sea he loved—but fire was the closest comrade. It had a voice that spoke in a language that he understood. He would speak to it now and then in quick staccato sentences: appreciative phrases as to a wise brother.

Clare Trensham, Marsforth's niece, was often in impetuous rebellion against the oddities of his old age. But then, Clare was a creature of impetuosity. This afternoon, standing in the wind-swept garden, she was vehemently refusing Jan Setton.

"But—" Setton's pauses were always

prodded to completion by Clare.

"But what? But-Jan, I could run a race and win it whilst you sought for the next word. But-"

"Well, yesterday you as good as said

you'd marry me," Jan said.
"Ah, but with conditions, with reservations. Jan the obedient—dear old Jan."

He laughed, of course. One did with Clare. She was all quick movement and variability, as attractive as a will-o'-the-wisp dancing in shadow.

"Obedience, Jan. I must follow my bent. You talk of staying here-country cousins for the rest of our days."

"With holidays," Jan amended.

could have peeps at cities—as much as is good for you," he laughed.

She was grave suddenly—but still vehement. "If you love me, Jan, you'll give me what I ask. You can. Your uncle Christopher offers you a good post. Yours for the taking, and you hesitate! Well, I don't. It's Jan and I in the city-or Jan alone in the country. I'll not rusticate as a wife."

She watched him appraisingly. He was nice to look at; clean, well-made, steadyeyed—and amenable. Her Jan Setton, who was wax to be moulded by her capable fingers.

"I'll rusticate alone, then," Jan said abruptly. "I know my limits. I'd be no use there. Here I've a niche."

"Grooves." She was full of quick anger now. "Very well, stay in them, Jan, and alone."

Movement was always an accompaniment to the impetuous ripples of her temper. She turned now and was gone like a shot from his side. She came panting into the room where old Henry Marsforth sat staring at flames. The room matched her mood,-wind-filled, girt about by the sea and high hills, with dancing fire on the hearth.

From the south window she could see Jan Setton moving slowly to the gate. Slow—she counted a hundred before the latch clicked and the top of his head disappeared. Slow—and she was aflame with eagerness and a sense of life. Well-she had given him her ultimatum.

The wind came teasingly into the room. It tweaked at her hair and blew strands about her eyes. She put up her hands to push the strands into her ribbon band, but remembered suddenly that Jan liked her hair-ribbon. She pulled it instantly from her hair. Even in details he should not sway her. The ribbon was crimson; fallen to the floor it was lifted and turned to a toy for the wind's humour. For old Marsforth's humour, too. He watched it till the wind blew it to his feet.

"Flame colour," Marsforth chuckled. "See—like to like." He stooped to the fire and put the ribbon on it. It curled and shrivelled, blackened, turned to ash. Marsforth nodded over his shoulder. "Fire Elemental—a good brother.'

He was off now on his hobby. Elements, earth, air, fire, and water-but fire the prettiest and the most thorough.

Good Brother Fire,"

Jan as wax to be moulded—that was always Clare's simile. She smiled presently over a sheer sense of relief. Jan was adoration in essence. He could no more live without her than old uncle Marsforth could live without his companionable fireside. It would take the merest trifle of time to bring Jan back, capitulation brimming to his lips.

She was half dancing now, to and fro about the room. She loved Jan Setton. Together in the city they would have rare times. Here in the country she would

stagnate.

"Tired, Uncle?" she asked aloud.

"Tired? No . . . no. . . . Happy. Got down to bed-rock. Elemental things. No trimmings." His old head turned for a glance at sea and hills. His eyes followed appraisingly the fluttering, wind-swayed trees and curtains. He stooped to the fire, holding his hands to it. "Elements. Fire the most brotherly."

She was compassionate—when she had time to spare for him. She came now to his side, patting his shoulder.

"Your fire burnt my ribbon," she smiled

"Yes. Good Brother. Burns dross if you'll let him."

"Dross?"

His eyes, uplifted, met Clare's for a fleeting moment. They were deep-set eyes, oddly piercing. Before old age took him prisoner he had been alert and shrewd. Even now, in flashes, he seemed to appraise, to sum up.

"Best thing to do sometimes," he was "Give rubbish to the flames." saying.

"Rubbish? My hair-ribbon?"

She had torn it from her hair in a petulant moment, she remembered. Dross? Those moods of hers! Well, possibly. Poor old Jan!

She was swayed now by an impulse of regret. Dear Jan Setton. After all, she must meet his capitulation half-way. She must show her sense of his generosity.

Clare had crossed to the writing-table in a moment. She was as full of lovely unexpected movements as the leaves that danced and fluttered outside. She wrote rapidly, smiling to herself as her pen hurried.

"JAN DEAR,-

"I was cross just now. I'm like that, aren't I? I'm full of tempers, and you're the calm lake I toss them into. But, Jan-

I love you. There, I've said it.

"Something tells me you'll not let trifles mar the rest. You'd soon get used to city life and the new setting. We'd be together. Jan, you're a brick. You're gold unalloyed. You're everything that stands for the tip-top. I know almost before you come to tell me that you'll see we can't stay here and vegetate. But I do thank you for seeing it . . . for yielding. You will yield, Jan. I feel it in my bones."

Her letter covered two sheets, and every sentence a-brim with the joy of conquest. In the years to come she would mould Jan into her ideal of the conformable mate.

She danced across to old Marsforth's side

again.

"Life's good, Uncle Henry. When you were young, you felt that? Just being alive—"

"Elemental," he nodded. "That's it. Life . . . clean, wholesome as air, earth, water, fire. Take their medicine and you'll be healthy. Brother Fire will burn the rubbish."

She was hardly listening. One didn't except now and then, when the sheer intensity of Marsforth's eyes compelled. He seemed to have cut loose from accepted moorings and to be voyaging strange seas of thought.

"Rubbish." He was repeating the word. "What is rubbish?" she smiled at him.

"You know," he said tersely.

"I? Why I particularly?"

"Such a lot of it," he nodded. " Nothing

save Brother Fire can help."

She had turned from him before he ended his sentence. Someone had pushed a letter under the door. She saw the white envelope a-gleam on the dark floor. From Jan-she danced across the room and stooped for it. Capitulation, and rapt sentences of love; almost before she tore the envelope open she knew the contents.

But—did she? This Jan Setton's yielding? Say that she found steel, unbreakable, where she had looked for wax.

"I know my limits," Jan wrote. "I'll not step beyond them. It's here for me—not the city and Uncle Christopher. I've my niche. I can succeed in a small fashion. If the fashion seems too small for you, Clare, then it's good-bye."

All of her was anger. It beat about her like a storm. She was storm. Elements—

flesh. She drew her chair to the window; farther back in the room she couldn't breathe.

"That's final, then," her pen hurried. "Stay here, vegetate, grow old and foolish like Uncle Henry. But I'll not marry you. Love? For you, Jan? I would as soon love the floor of this room, the door-panels,



"'Well, yesterday you as good as said you'd marry me,' Jan said."

she was as one tossed, sea-rocked, shattered by some earthquake upheaval, burnt by the fierce flame of anger. She went to the north window and threw the casement wider. She loved the lash of the wind about her head and shoulders.

She must have some outlet. It must be of the pen, since Jan was not here in the

anything that stays still and has no soul for lifting itself."

There seemed no end to her zentences. The wind in a rough outburst of familiarity plucked at the written sheets and scattered them about the floor, drove them like chaff to the ingle where Henry Marsforth sat. Before Clare could

stop him he had gathered them into his hands.

"Stop—you mustn't burn them." She was at his side in a moment. But his hands

manner suddenly had a hint of triumph. "Just litter to be burnt."

She put her hands on his, but he shook them off. When she would have put them



"'Best thing to do sometimes,' he was saying. 'Give rubbish to the flames.'"

were iron suddenly. His eyes—well, he was queer. You never quite knew. Sometimes he seemed to come from his mists and hold a torch to your soul.

"Rubbish." He was half laughing. His

back he pushed them away. He had been a strong man in his prime, and his muscles obeyed his call now. Clare was impotent. She could only crouch near him and watch her angry letter burn. The flames rose,



before I could reason with you in person."

forth, content, sat staring at his comrade Fire.

"Reason?" She would have scorned the word but for a certain immovability on Jan's face. "Reason! In stagnating?"

"In doing the thing I'm cut out for doing.

It's final, Clare."

They both ignored Marsforth. At the moment he was simply part of the room's fitting, as little to be singled out as chair or table. He had sat so long by the fire that he seemed one with it.

"Some day you'll see it's the best, Clare,"

Jan said.

Clare swayed suddenly towards him. She fought a lovely sense of yielding. She felt voyaging, despite herself, to harbour. But how know that to-morrow would not find her in rebellion again? How know that she could drop anchor finally? How—

"Litter," Marsforth was nodding to himself. "Just litter. Burn the lot of it. Brother Fire. . . ." He stooped nearer to the flames, holding his hands to the warmth. "Good Brother."

"You'd be afraid, Jan," Clare was whispering. "You'd never know. I'm full of moods—angers. How could you know? You'd feel afraid."

Actually he laughed. "Afraid? Never." Standing behind Marsforth, he pointed to the old man's back. "He's got the secret."

"What secret?"

"His Brother Fire . . . burns up litter.

And your moods are just rubbish, Clare. You know it."

She glanced at the hearth, aglow, vivid, visible fire for old Marsforth to talk to and approve. But—invisible fire? In their lives—hers and Jan's?

"You love me?" Jan was asking.
"Yes, rather," she laughed at him.

"Then—that's fire. That's a flame that will always burn up rubbish. We'll trust to it."

Love, a fire? She visualised it suddenly. Well, it was. Already in the flame of it her sense of proportion was returning. Jan was made for his niche; he fitted, was ordained for it. It must be Jan here—or nowhere.

Clare's capitulations were as instant as her tempers. She was a dancing figure of gaiety in a moment.

"That's that! We'll stay, Jan. Here, with Uncle Henry, near his good Brother

Fire."

Marsforth's ears must have caught here and there a stray thread of their sentences, because he spoke aloud now, with a half-chuckle of mirth.

"Love's the Big Fire. A furnace—Brother Fire at his fiercest. None of the rubbish left when he's done his job. Fire Elemental. . . ."

Clare and Jan Setton looked at each other. In a moment of exaltation they visualised the elemental fire of love burning dross and leaving only the immortal.

THE END OF THE LANE.

I WENT with my love to the end of the lane,
To the end of the lane when the moon was high;
And the trees ceased their whispers and bent down their heads,
To know what we said, my love and I,
At the end of the lane when the moon was high.

I stood with my love at the end of the lane, And the end of the lane was enchanted ground; I looked through her eyes to the depths of her soul, And the trees shook their heads, with a shuddering sound, And the end of the lane was enchanted ground.

But we had to part at the end of the lane, At the end of the lane when the moon was high; And only the trees knew the things that we thought, For we spoke no word, and we breathed no sigh, At the end of the lane when the moon was high.

KEVIN NANGLE.

ODD MAN OUT

By GORDON LATTA

■ ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR GARRATT
 ■

EAR Peter," ran Henry's invitation, "My poor dear wife has become obsessed with the idea that you might like to revisit your childhood's haunts now that we have taken a house down here. In spite of the jade's denials, I suspect her of having seen a moving picture with an even more moving title, such as 'Alone in London,' and been touched thereby. However, if you really do feel the call of the Hampshire loam, I am prepared to offer you the shelter of my roof together with a little plain, wholesome food during the coming week-end. I make this offer in spite of the sternest warnings from my medical adviser against all unnecessary shocks, being ever mindful of the inspiring French proverb 'honi soit,' or do I mean 'sauve qui peut'? In any case, I would suggest that, if the villagers here remember your infancy as vividly as I do, a simple but effective disguise should be bought.

P.S.—Edna says I mean 'noblesse oblige.'"

I wrote back:—

"DEAR HENRY,-

"If you should see a clergyman with a pronounced squint and long black beard arrive at Lyndford on Friday at 4.30 and proceed to roll along the platform, it won't be your humble servant. Nevertheless, I propose to travel by that train."

Henry Bell's invitation came at a singularly appropriate time, for I was beginning to find London insufferably hot. Henry and I had been contemporaries at Rugby and Oxford, and, though we saw less of each other after his marriage, we never lost sight of each other entirely. His wife, Edna, was some sort of relation of mine, which may account for her kindly interest in me. They had recently taken a house in the New Forest, only a few miles from where I had been born, so that a certain proportion of Henry's letter was based on fact.

As I had not been in Hampshire since the age of ten, it was with some excitement that I made for Waterloo on the Friday afternoon in question. What was unfortunate was that I made for it in one of the slowest taxis ever seen in London, and that we contrived to come in for far more than our share of traffic jams. The result of this was that my train was well on the move as I raced up the platform. Spurred on by shouts of an admonitory nature from porters and of an encouraging nature from a messenger-boy, I leapt on to the footboard, dropped my bag through the open window, swung open the door and successfully got The success was limited to my getting on board, for my entrance was marred by my bag, which sent me sprawling along the carriage floor. As I rose painfully, preparatory to examining the damage, I caught sight of the one other occupant of the compartment. I noted two large grey eyes, the almost unbelievable innocence of which was belied by a slightly turned-up nose. A small hand covered her mouth, with the well-meaning intention of concealing her laughter, a manœuvre rendered conspicuously unsuccessful by the quivering of her body.

"We are not amused," I said a trifle

bitterly.

"I'm sorry," she apologised, revealing both the suspected smile and a determined little chin, "but I'm afraid we are. You looked so fu-hunny." Laughter once more had her in its grip.

"It would have been a pity if someone had not been amused," I remarked. "Now, I wonder if you would pull the communication cord if I swore just a little."

"Certainly I would, and scream and scream. I'm a lady, I am, and know what's

expected of me."

Then swearing's orf. We will now turn our attention to the next item on the menu—pantalons à la poussière. I propose to remove same. The dust, not the trousers," I added hastily. She watched with

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interest while I removed the more outstand-

ing patches of dirt.

It's a hard life," she remarked sympathetically, as I sank wearily into the corner opposite her.

Ah, Life!" I soliloquised. "Life would be all right if we didn't have to live it."

"Dear me! that sounds remarkably like an epigram. It doesn't mean anything, does it?"

"No," I admitted, "it doesn't actually mean anything, but it goes down astonish-

ingly well at dances."

- So few people know the right kind of conversation for dances. My last supper partner would talk about arsenic in apples. and was quite stuffy when I asked him whether there was much cocaine in cocoa-
- "Fancy that now!" I said in mock surprise, "and you taking such an intelligent interest too. Still, there are more absorbing subjects-"

"Such as blotting-paper," she suggested

kindly.

"Such as yourself," I said firmly.

"Oh, sir," she answered, casting her eyes demurely downwards, "I am but a simple country girl: what interest can you find in me? Pray, tell me about yourself?"

"Certainly," I consented with more eagerness than gallantry. "Born of rich

but honest parents---'

"A rare combination nowadays," she commented.

"I was sent to Eton and Oxford, unless it was Harrow and Cambridge; for the moment I cannot recall which. From there I tramped to London with a shilling in my pocket and all the ambitions of youth in my heart. Once arrived at the great metropolis, I expended my small fortune on a sword, which I swallowed nightly at all the most prominent halls, thereby winning my way into the hearts of the British Public."

"A romantic career," she pronounced. "Was your skill acquired at the university?"

"It was hereditary. My father once swallowed a fishing story."

"And what are you now?"

"An insurance agent."

"What do you insure?" she asked, "or is it a secret?"

"I ensure that you smile as often as possible. That is why I have been so deucedly funny."

"Oh, have you?" she said vaguely. "I mean-" I rose with dignity and sat down in the far corner of the compart-

"No explanations, I beg," I said ment.

"Oh dear!" she said to herself, her mouth drooping pathetically. "Now I've gone and offended him."

I continued to stare out of the window in a pretended huff, until a small object hit me on the cheek and bounded on to the floor. On recovering it from beneath the seat, I found it to be a caramel done up in paper. I turned to my companion, in whose cheek a slight bulge had appeared.

"Madam," I said sternly, "are you responsible for the blow dealt me by this

sweetmeat?"

"It's a peace-offering," she explained. "Put it in your pipe and smoke it. I mean,

put it in your face and suck it."

I followed her instructions, and she clapped her hands with pleasure. "Now you can't be huffy any more," she said, "and we can continue our entrancing but interrupted conversation."

This we did, and, for the first time in my life, I found a train go too fast for my liking. Indeed, so little attention did we pay to the time, that we had glided into Southton before she realised that she was even approaching her destination. Consequently, the saying of farewells was curtailed by the rush of gathering her things together and ejecting them on to the platform. Once this was accomplished, she held out a small gloved hand. "Goodbye, Mr. er-er-" she said with a mischievous smile.

"Muir," I supplied, "but my friends call me Peter."

"Good-bye-Peter," she said, with the faintest hesitation.

"Good-bye, Miss er-er-"

The train had just begun to move. She took a few steps along beside it. "Carlyle," she said, then added almost in a whisper, "My friends call me Diana."

"Good-bye, Diana," I said, and catching one of her hands as she walked, I raised it to my lips. A few seconds later we went round a bend and I lost sight of her.

I should like to be able to say that, during the quarter of an hour which the train took to cover the ten miles between Southton and Lyndford, my thoughts were occupied with the affairs of central Europe or a new theory of relativity. Unfortunately, they were exclusively filled by a pair of large, grey eyes and a slightly turned-up

I found Edna and Henry waiting for me

on the platform at Lyndford, and they

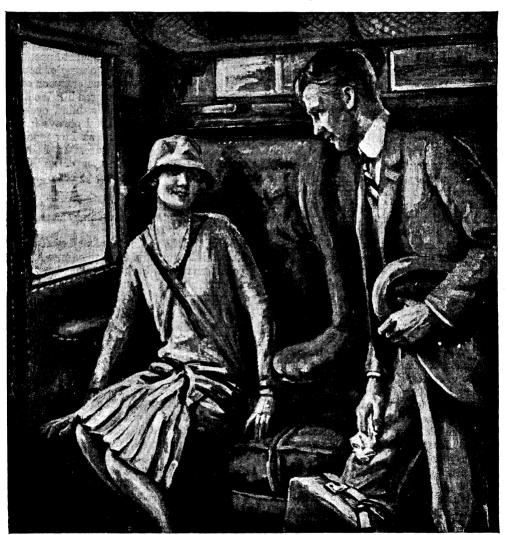
conducted me to their car.

"You must pardon the absence of a band," Henry said politely, as I climbed in beside Edna, "but I assure you that it was not due to negligence. I applied for a band suitable for greeting a notorious citizen at the station, but found that its services had

"I think you are very wise," remarked Henry significantly, and I confined my conversation to Edna for what remained of the journey.

"You'll be able to visit Blackvale while you're here," she informed me. "Ah, what happy memories that house must bring

back to you."



"'It would have been a pity if someone had not been amused,' I remarked. 'Now, I wonder if you would pull the communication cord if I swore just a little.'"

already been commandeered by the local temperance association. However, Edna has come provided with her mouth-organ, and she is prepared to oblige you on it with selections from her repertoire."

"Oh, let there be no ceremony, I beg," I said hastily. "I should much prefer to arrive incognito."

"Ah, the good old days!" I said soulfully, and then asked, "Who is living there now?"

"It's for sale, but someone has rented it for a year—a spinster, I understand."

"Haven't you called ?" I asked reproach-

"She doesn't come in till to-morrow,

according to village gossip, so don't start teaching your betters their social duties," she told me severely, thereby initiating an argument which lasted until we reached the house. As we sat down to tea, Henry volunteered a piece of advice. "Eat a good tea," he said, "because Edna has set her mind on having a picnic dinner. I must confess that the amusement which lies in transporting one's food into the heart of the Forest, there to eat it in the company of beetles, worms, and other denizens of the sub-soil, is one that escapes me. However, I was never one to mar the enjoyment of others by preliminary forebodings."

"He really enjoys it as much as anyone," Edna protested indignantly, "but he has a sneaking fear that he might be expected to admire the sunset, and that would be so

terribly un-British."

Henry shrugged his shoulders resignedly, but it should be recorded that it was he who urged us to get ready when the hour for departure approached. I must confess that I myself was almost childishly excited during the half-hour's run in the car, and that the subsequent picnic thrilled me as much as had any some twenty years before. We smoked in silence for some time after the meal, watching the sun sinking behind the trees, and it came with something like a shock when Edna declared that it was after nine and time to be getting back.

"We might go back the other way," she suggested to Henry as we started off, "and then Peter can have the romantic pleasure of seeing Blackvale by moonlight."

"Very good, my Queen," replied Henry, and turned to me. "Does your heart beat quicker?" he asked. "And do your pulses throb more violently?" Then, heedless of my forceful negatives, added, "Ah, what it is to be young."

I eventually refused to reply to his quips, and the conversation lapsed until, after two or three miles, Henry stopped the car, and pointed dramatically towards a house just visible through the trees.

"Behold!" he said.

"Dear old Blackvale," I murmured,

almost to myself.

"He'll begin remembering, remembering in a minute," Henry informed Edna. "He may even go so far as to recollect the small window by which the sun made its entrance in the early morning."

I was scarcely listening. An irresistible desire to see the inside of the house again had suddenly swept over me. "Look here,"

I burst out, "I'm going in. It will be too late to-morrow. Be a good fellow and let me have a quarter of an hour."

Edna understood, as I knew she would. "Of course," she said, and I blessed her from the bottom of my heart. Henry coughed importantly. "I hope that you are not expecting me to accompany you," he said. "You cause me to reveal to you what my modesty has hitherto prevented me from divulging, namely, that I am a J.P. I therefore have what you may regard as an unreasonable prejudice against appearing before my own bench on a charge of housebreaking, burglary, felonious entry or even misdemeanour. I am prepared like Wellington at Trafalgar to wink a blind eye-or did he never smile again? I always forget which—but that is as far as I can go."

"Much obliged, I'm sure. If I don't come back within a quarter of an hour, perhaps you would venture to come in and

remove the body."

"With the greatest pleasure. You can rely on me for that," said Henry with quiet

and impressive dignity.

I climbed the palings, and walked through the semi-darkness up to the house. A brief inspection revealed a badly snibbed window, and my pen-knife completed its undoing. It was only a matter of a few seconds before I had clambered through the open window and entered what appeared to be the drawing-room. I threaded my way through the dust-sheeted furniture and went out into the hall. I hesitated for a moment as to whether I should put on a light, finally deciding against doing so lest it should lead to investigations. In the gloom of the darkened house I was beginning to regret my impulse, and I called myself several kinds of sentimental fool as I proceeded to go upstairs. The nursery, which was my objective, was on the second floor, but I stood for a moment on the first landing to see whether I could recapture any of the old sensations.

The experiment was not destined to be concluded, for the lights suddenly clicked on and, as I turned, I caught a glimpse of an arm descending towards the back of my head. There was no time for any very subtle thinking. I whirled round and dived almost simultaneously for my assailant's ankle. The manœuvre was successful, and a quick jerk brought us both in a jumbled mass to the ground. I leapt to my feet and stared at my prostrate opponent. As recognition dawned on me, I failed to repress

a gasp of astonishment, but I quickly pulled myself together.

"Good evening, Diana," I said with a

Refusing my proffered assistance, she rose to her feet. Clad in a gaudy silk dressing-gown of oriental design, beneath which peeped rose-pink pyjamas, she confronted me for a moment in speechless anger. The flush on her cheek made her look more attractive than ever, while I now saw for the first time her shingled mass of fair, almost yellow, hair.

"What are you doing here?" she burst out. "And how dare you knock me down?"

"I'm revisiting the old homestead," I informed her. "Roses round the door, whitehaired mammies and all that sort of thing. And I didn't knock you down, you know; I only tripped you up. Self-preservation that was. After all, you tried to cop me with a "-I looked round for her weapon, and found it-"with a poker. Surely you know what Hobbes and Rousseau say-

"When I wish for information concerning political science, I shall be glad to ask you for it," she said icily. "Meanwhile, perhaps you will inform me just what you are doing

in my house."

"Is it your house?" I exclaimed. "Now, that's a very remarkable coincidence, because it used to be mine. In fact, that is why I am here; I wanted to revisit the old shack before the new tenant came in."

"Unfortunately the new tenant came in a day ahead of her staff. I must confess that your explanation does not strike me

as very satisfactory."

"Nevertheless, I give you my word of honour that it is the true one."

She shrugged her shoulders. "Possibly," she said.

"Do you know," I said genially, "that at this moment it would give me very great pleasure to spank you?"

I saw her hands clench. "Am I to interpret that as a threat?" she asked with the

faintest quiver in her voice.

"You are to interpret it as a manifestation of my dislike of having my word doubted."

There was silence for a few seconds while we faced each other. Then she held out her hand. "I'm sorry," she said. "I accept your explanation."

I took her hand. "Will you accept my

apologies too?" I asked.

"For what?"

"For reducing you to my level when that

level was not a very high one," I said, and was rewarded by seeing her smile.

"You don't apologise for coming in,

then?" she inquired.

"Of course, if I had known you were going to be here-"' I began, and hesitated.

"Yes-" she encouraged.

"I should have come in a good deal earlier," I proceeded.

She laughed. "I'm afraid you're incorri-

gible."

"I think I might be taught—by kindness."

She flushed deliciously, and changed the subject. "Perhaps you would like to come over and see the house by daylight." There was the faintest emphasis on the last word.

"I shall take that as a definite invitation," I said. She was about to reply when we were both startled by a noise, as of an overturned chair, from the ground floor. She looked at me in surprise tinged with anxiety, and for a moment I too was completely at sea. Then I remembered that it must be Henry coming in for the body. In a hasty series of whispers, I told her the situation, and then made a suggestion which caused her grey eyes to twinkle with mischief. She quickly switched off the light, while I climbed noiselessly to the next floor, whence I could watch the fun.

Henry had now had time to pick up the chair, and he appeared in the hall a bare second after the lights had gone out. With bated breath I saw him mounting the stairs. As he reached the top step but one, Diana switched up the lights again and waved the poker at him menacingly.

"Got you," she cried triumphantly.

Henry's face was a pleasure to watch. He appeared to be muttering under his breath, and I devoutly hoped that his words were as inaudible to Diana as they were to

"Look here, let me explain," he finally

burst out.

"You can do all your explaining at the

police station," she told him severely.
"But I say, look here, what I mean is I only came to fetch the body," the wretched man began to stutter out. Diana's piercing scream, which cut his explanation short, was astonishingly realistic.

"So that's what you've been at," she said indignantly. "Well, you've done it once too often. I shall send for the police immediately, you murderous ruffian."

"I say," said Henry, "that's a bit strong,

"Don't attempt back answers with me.

Turn round and walk downstairs. I shall walk behind you, and if you make any attempt to escape, I shall crack your skull."

"Dash it all," began Henry desperately, do listen to what I'm trying to say. I've

only just——"

"If you are going to tell me about your wife and family," she interrupted, "you are merely wasting your time. What about the family of the poor fellow you killed?"

"I haven't killed anyone," said Henry

crossly.

"Then, how can there be a body?" asked Diana sharply. "You go downstairs and

stop your nonsense."

Henry made one more effort at an explanation, but a hastily raised poker caused him to give up the unequal struggle, and he proceeded downstairs. Shaking with suppressed laughter, I tiptoed after them at a safe distance. Diana drove him to the telephone in spite of his agonised protests, and compelled him to stand with his back to her. Then, keeping her finger on the receiver hook, she began an imaginary conversation.

"Hullo, hullo. Put me through to the police station, please. . . . Hullo, is that Southton police station? . . . I am speaking from Blackvale. . . . No, Blackvale. . . . Yes, that's right. I've just captured a dangerous criminal. . . ."

At this point I felt that it was time for me to leave. I crept out by the way I had entered, and, at my leisure, joined Edna in the car. I gave her a detailed description of the whole situation, and found her as delighted with it as I was.

"Serve him right," was her verdict.
"He insisted on creeping in so that he could suddenly appear to you as the ghost of your nauseating past. I told him at the time that it was both silly and dangerous."

"Ah, poor fellow," I said sadly. "We must not speak too hardly of him. She may have smashed his skull by now."

"If she has," said Edna warmly, "I shall consider that she has gone rather too far. It's not every stranger that I would let monkey about with my husband."

"Oh, quite, quite," I agreed hastily. Then guilefully I made a suggestion. "Perhaps you could ask her to tea to-morrow, and then we might go into the matter

further."

She was assenting when we heard the sound of running. Henry soon came into view, and, vaulting the palings, ran up to the car. At the sight of me his jaw dropped.

"You!" he said. "Where have you been!"

"Waiting here for you lately," I replied. We were well on the move when next he spoke. "I suppose you didn't meet anyone in there?" he asked, as carelessly as he

"Who on earth was there to meet except you?" I exclaimed in affected surprise.

"Oh, no one, I suppose. I was just wondering." The laugh he attempted was scarcely a success, and the subject was no more alluded to that night.

Diana readily accepted Edna's invitation to tea on the following day, thereby lifting a great weight from my mind. I mentioned the matter to Henry only a few minutes before she was due to arrive.

"By the way," I said casually, "I've got a friend of mine coming over to tea. I hope you don't mind. I met her on the train yesterday."

"Let them all come," replied Henry

airily. "This is Liberty Hall; take any liberties you like. Where is she staying?" "Somewhere near Southton, I believe,"

I said vaguely, and was relieved to see that Henry's suspicions were not aroused. Beyond showing a desire not to leave the house and grounds all day, he had not betrayed any effects from his escapade of the night before. I was anxious that he should remain in his fool's paradise a few minutes longer.

As the hands of the clock drew close to four o'clock, I awaited Diana's arrival with impatience that was not wholly caused by my excitement at the comedy about to be enacted. I was not kept waiting long, for the sound of her car was to be heard coming up the drive. A minute later she entered the room, with a faint look of shyness that I found adorable. I heard a gasp of anguish from Henry as I introduced her to Edna, and then we turned to him. While not by the smallest flicker of an eyelash did she show any sign of recognition, the same could not be said for Henry, whose face was nearly purple. With an effort that won my reluctant admiration, he pulled himself together and made the appropriate remarks. He recovered still more during the general conversation which followed, until I gave Diana a suitable opening by asking, you find it very quiet down here?"

"Well," she answered, "I don't find life even down here without its excitements. A man broke into my house last night."

I saw Henry suddenly grip the arms of

his chair, but his face showed nothing but interested surprise. "By Jove!" he said, "that can't have been very pleasant. Did

you catch him?"

"Not in the end," she admitted. "Luckily he was a pretty cowardly fellow, for I was quite defenceless except for a small poker." She contrived at the moment to look almost pathetically helpless, in striking contrast to her menacing efficiency on the previous evening.

"That type of man often is a coward at heart," I declared. "What did he look

like ? "

"He had what I should call a typically criminal face. I imagine that he was the kind of man who would have stopped at nothing"

nothing."

I regret to say that at this point Edna was attacked with a very severe cough, while Henry appeared to be on the verge of apoplexy. When conversation could once more be resumed, Edna asked the height of the intruder. Diana's gaze came to rest on the miserable Henry. "Oh, about Mr. Bell's height, I should think," she declared.

"Fancy that now!" I heard Henry mutter

under his breath.

"How did the man get away in the end?" I asked with genuine interest.

"By a most elementary trick: I am ashamed that I was taken in by it. He suddenly shouted, 'Look out behind you,' and I was foolish enough to turn my head. Then he made a bolt for it, and escaped."

"Most annoying," I commented.

"I think it will be all right," Diana assured me, and, apparently having no scruples about perjury in a good cause, continued, "I've put the police on his track, and they have found some most promising clues; they don't think that he will be at liberty more than twenty-four hours."

"I'd have those fellows flogged if I had my way," I said severely. I saw Henry's eye on me, but I flatter myself that I successfully preserved my attitude of righteous indignation.

"By the way," asked Edna, "where is it that you are staying? You haven't told

us yet."

Henry rose hastily, at the same time upsetting the fire-irons. "I am so sorry," he apologised, "but wasn't that the telephone I heard?"

We all made a pretence of listening, but it is scarcely necessary to say that there was no sound of a bell. "I must have been mistaken," Henry admitted. "Noises in the head and all that sort of thing. A most useful invention the telephone, isn't it?" he inquired, turning to Diana.

"There are some occasions when it is an extraordinarily useful invention," I could

not refrain from putting in.

"Why, yes," assented Diana. "If I hadn't had it last night, I don't know what I should have done."

"No, I suppose not," said Henry, with more haste than coherence, and made a second attempt at changing the conversation by asking Diana whether she would care to see the garden. I once more succeeded in thwarting him. "I had promised myself the pleasure of showing it to her after tea," I informed him. Henry shrugged his shoulders resignedly, and then winced as Edna said to Diana, "You haven't told us yet where you are staying. Henry interrupted us, if you remember."

"Blame your pore old 'usband," burst out Henry in a last desperate effort to avoid catastrophe, "wot's worn 'isself to a shadder for yer. A very hard woman, my wife," he

concluded for Diana's benefit.

"Well," she said with a smile, "if she is too hard on you, come over to Blackvale and be comforted."

There was a moment's silence as Edna and I turned our accusing eyes on Henry.

"Blackvale!" I said. "Have you taken Blackvale?"

"Why, yes," she answered, in affected

"That's where we were last night."

Immediately a third pair of accusing eyes turned themselves on Henry; then Diana gave a gasp. "I believe you are the very man," she said fiercely.

"Oh, Henry," said Edna and I together.

"How could you?"

"I admit all," confessed Henry, "and I'll go quiet. But stop looking at me like that, all of you, or I shall burst into tears."

Edna wrung her hands. "Spare this miserable creature," she cried. "He is my only husband."

I stepped forward. "Let me too intercede for this half-wit," I said. "The shame he has brought on his family and friends—particularly his friends—is punishment enough."

"Well," said Diana, "if he is really sorry, and promises to do no more murders, I think the matter might be allowed to drop."

"And he did look so funny walking down

those stairs in front of you," I added, "that should be taken into consideration."

Henry rose with a bound. " And what do you know about that?" he asked hotly.

"Quite a lot," I replied indignantly.

"After all, I put her up to it."

Speechless, Henry looked at each of us in turn. "Words fail me" he said eventu-



"He had what I should call a typically criminal face. I imagine that he was the kind of man who would have stopped at nothing."

ally. "To think that I should offer food and shelter to an imbecile, who turns against the hand that fed him; to think that I should enter a strange house to recover his vile body, only to be assaulted by his accomplice in crime and deceived by false telephonic communications; to think that in my hour of trouble my own wife turns against me!



"Diana's gaze came to rest on the miserable Henry."

But it was ever thus: the wise are at the

mercy of fools."

Edna led him quietly to a chair, with the suggestion that he would feel better after a nice, strong cup of tea. His reply was fortunately rendered inaudible by the entry of the tea itself, and conversation became non-controversial once more.

When we had finished, Diana accepted my invitation to view the garden. "I'm sorry you two can't come," I said meaningly to Henry and Edna. They exchanged glances, but Henry played up. "I am sorry that you are going to be shown the garden by that sorry substitute," he said to Diana, "but ever since I had beri-beri in Kandahar, I have been very susceptible to a chill on the—that is to say, to a chill. As for my wife, she has strict orders from her medical adviser not to take exercise after a heavy meal, such as she has just made."

Edna's glance did not bode well for Henry, but Diana and I slipped out before the storm broke. In the process of time, we reached the rose garden, where Diana stopped to admire a superb bush of red Horace Vernets. "Aren't they exquisite?" she exclaimed.

"My luve is like a red, red rose," I sang half to myself, and then added, "They ought to be called Diana Carlyles."

"I hope you are not going to be silly," she said, but without any very great con-

viction.

"Certainly not," I assured her, "I was only about to observe to you the well-known aphorism that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

"Have you thought of a third name for

them, then?" she asked.

"Diana Muir," I said, and watched her blush. Then I changed the subject. "I made arrangements to buy Blackvale to-day," I informed her.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed in pretended dismay. "Are you going to turn me out?"

"Not for the world. But we might come

to an understanding."
"I will go and see a lawyer," she said

demurely.

"No," I replied firmly, "we shall both go and see a clergyman." And then I found her in my arms.

BLUE WINGS.

THE loud bell strikes the hour,
And now, like leaves outblown,
Lo! from the tall bell-tower
A flock of doves are flown.

The golden sunset gleams,
And there the blue doves spin
A Roundabout of Dreams
My thoughts are turning in.

Nought ask they of the light; Enough for them to know The loveliness of flight That leaves the earth below.

My heart's with chimes a-thrill,
Like doves my thoughts fly out
And follow where they fill
The sky's blue Roundabout.

WILFRID THORLEY.



COURT CEREMONY.

LITTLE TONY (in sailor suit): Mummy, when the King passes, ought I to salute or stand beheaded?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

WHO WROTE SHAKESPEARE? Bu Charles H. Lea.

Who wrote Shakespeare? is a question which was once conclusively proved by a wag who declared that at last he had settled the vexed question regarding the authorship of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare of Stratfordon-Avon. He stated that as there are four letters in the word "Will," and eleven in the word "Shakespeare," it is obvious that by taking the fourth letter from the end of the names of eleven Shakespearean plays, the truth will be revealed:-

> Mac Beth. Oth Ello. Comedy of ErRors. Merchant of Ve Nice. Coriol A nus. Midsummer Night's DReam. Merry Wives of Win D sor. Measure for Mea Sure. Much Ado about Not Hing. Antony and Cleop Atra. All's Well that Ends Well.

The result is plain for all to see-"Bernard

Shaw"!

For eighty years the belief has persisted in the minds of a few people that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare. Some of the rival claims are serious, some absurd, and many unblushingly humorous. The clue to many of these claims was a curious cryptogram, the long word in "Love's Labour Lost," which is the polysyllable "honorificabilitudinitatibus." Yet this can prove that Bacon not only wrote the thirty-seven plays of Shakespeare, but also Spenser's poems, and the works of Nash, Greene, Kyd, Peele, Marlowe, and Burton. All of them wrote voluminously, yet Bacon was one of the hardest working men of his age.

Several hundred books have been written to prove that Shakespeare was not himself; that he was Bacon; and that he was either the 6th Earl of Rutland, the 17th Earl of Oxford, the 6th Earl of Derby, or else a certain Sir W. Shapleigh.

Yet it is well known that cryptograms can prove nothing. Illustrating this platitude, we can show that Shakespeare wrote the Bible!

History tells us that Shakespeare retired to Stratford in 1610; in the following year the Authorised Version of the Bible appeared, and

it is possible that, having been engaged on the task for seven years, the bishops tired, and called in an experienced writer to finish the translating. In the Book of Judges, chapter 16, verse 20, occurs the significant statement, "I will shake myself!"

Now let us get better proof. In 1610 Shakespeare was forty-six; in the word "Shakespear" are four vowels and six consonants.

milia ...

This spelling of his name without the final "e" was sometimes followed by the dramatist, thus leaving ten letters in his name. Now, then,



A MERE SCRATCH.

HE: I say, this is rough. That horse we backed won't run now—they've scratched it.

SHE: How very unfair. As if a little scratch would hurt it!

the 10th word of the 10th verse of the 46th Psalm is "will," and in the same verse are the words "I am," which makes "William." In addition, the 46th word from the beginning of the Psalm is "shake," and the 46th word from the end is "Spear."

Therefore as "William Shakespear" is cunningly interwoven in the 46th Psalm, it follows that Shakespeare wrote it when he was 46 years of age; and if he wrote one Psalm, why not all of them?

And if the Psalms, why not the whole of the Bible?

THE MISTAKE. By Jack House.

"To-MORROW," said Herbert to his wife, "to-morrow is the birthday of Aunt Esther." "More than that!" said Clarinda to her hus-

band. "It is also the birthday of Uncle Fred." "Well, we can't miss them," said Herbert

"Well, we can't miss them," said Herbert thoughtfully. "We've great expectations on both sides. What shall we send them?"

"It must be something really decent." Clarinda's gaze fixed itself on some distant vision as she spoke. "What does Uncle Fred do?"

"Snores," suggested Herbert.

"Don't be silly. Let's see now."

"Drinks," remarked Herbert.
"Stop being horrid," said Clarinda.

"I've got it, though! He smokes!"
Herbert's face assumed an expression of concern.

"Clarinda," he said earnestly,
"you're not going to send him cigars,

are you?"

"I don't see why I shouldn't," she returned, "but I wasn't thinking of that, anyway. How would a nice smoking-cap do?"
"Ye-es." Herbert was still doubt-

"Ye-es." Herbert was still doubtful. "I suppose that would be all

right."

"Of course it would. Now, what about Aunt Esther?"

"A cocktail-mixer?" remarked Herbert brightly.

"Really, you're impossible!"

"Of course," went on Herbert, "if you want to know Aunt Esther's favourite occupation, it's having tea in bed."

"The very thing," cried Clarinda.

"A boudoir cap!"

Realising the futility of protest, Herbert accompanied his wife on a short shopping expedition. Clarinda tehose a "dinky" smoking-cap ("If Uncle Fred heard that!" thought Herbert) and an exquisite boudoir cap of pale lilac.

"Now, Herbert," said she, when they returned home, "I'll write letters of congratulation and you can tie up the parcels and address them."

as he was told. Soon everything was ready and Herbert, a parcel in each hand, rushed out to the post. In ten minutes he returned.

"You're sure everything's all right?" asked

Clarinda.

"Absoloo—" and the word froze in his mouth. He grew strangely pale.

"What's the matter?" cried Clarinda. "You surely haven't sent the parcels to the wrong people?"

"No!" gasped Herbert. "Worse—far worse than that! I've sent them to the right people. I've spoiled the Windson's story!"





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Rare Secrets of Beauty By MIMOSA

Many of my readers have written me inquiring about the merits of various preparations they have been using. It is impossible for me to answer such queries here. In general, my advice to women who wish to retain, or regain, their youthful appearance is to avoid the usual cheap made up preparations. Nature provides many first-hand "beautifiers," and the best results come from using original ingredients. Many of the things I advise involve no expense whatever; the others can be procured from any reliable chemist. If he does not happen to have what you want he can quickly procure it, if you insist. The smart, dainty woman wants to know what she is using.

"Run Down."—Functional slackness—when the organs are even the merest trifle "out of balance"—is the root cause of a host of ills—nervous and digestive. There is no need to take drastic measures. Nine times out of ten you simply need a gentle tonic which will stimulate your weakened power of nutrition. Iron-Ox tiny tonic tablets is the ideal remedy. "Disfiguring Hair Growths."—Do not risk it. Just use Sipolite. Get about half an ounce from the chemist and mix a little into a paste with a few drops of water, and apply direct to the superfluous hair, which will quickly disappear. "Removing Old Skin."—You must realize that in time the skin is bound to become more or less permaently sluggish and faded. The only real remedy is to actually remove the stifling outer veil of sluggish skin, in order to give the fresh complexion underneath a chance. Pure Mercolized Wax has remarkable absorptive properties, causing the worn-out skin to flake off very gradually in about ten days. The process is not noticeable, and if you will use this method you will find that your beautiful skin is still there, having been only covered up. The Mercolized Wax is applied at night, like cold cream. An ounce or two will do.

up. The Mercolized Wax is applied at night, like cold cream. An ounce or two will do.

"Advice About Hair."—You say your hair is falling out, has lost its colour, and is dry and brittle. Before anything else is 'undertaken give your hair a good shampoo with stallax; dissolve a teaspoonful in a cup of hot water, and wash the hair and scalp thoroughly. As your hair is naturally dry, you should rub plenty of olive oil into the scalp before washing. You may also make the most beneficial hair tonic by dissolving an ounce of pure boranium in a quarter of a pint of bay rum, rubbing it well into the scalp with a good stiff massage after the shampoo is rinsed off. Brush your hair thoroughly each night.

ingin.

"Discarding Rouge."—The rouge you wrote of is a trifle hard, I think, not blending well with the skin... I do not approve of rouge under any circumstances. Why not try colliandum? It produces the human tint better than rouge, and blends into

the skin in a way that defies detection.

"A Really Good Soap."—I should say your soap is too drying.

There is a kind called Pilenta, which I like to recommend, as It is deliciously perfumed and very cleansing.

"Healthy Slimness."—The most convenient method, and at

the same time the most efficient for the fat person to adopt, is to obtain a few Clynol Berries from the chemist, and to swallow one after each meal. They quickly and easily remove all traces of excess fat without exercise, starvation diet, or other weakening methods.
" Grey Hair."—I have observed many attempts of many people

"Grey Hair."—I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of one ounce of concentrate of tammalite mixed with four ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally. naturally.

naturally. "Blackheads and Enlarged Pores."—The sparkling face-bath treatment is the most pleasant and effective method of overcoming this trouble. Get a few stymol tablets from your chemist, and dissolve one in a cup of hot water. Dab the face with the lotion, and the blackheads will pop out and the large pores close up and efface themselves quite naturally.

UNDER THE SHOWER. By Arthur Groom. MONDAY.

SLOWLY, thoughtfully, Professor Heston walked from his bedroom to the bathroom. Placing himself under the shower, he turned on the water. For a few seconds he stood with the cold water pouring down upon him; then he had an idea and his hand went automatically to his side, only to slip off his skin.

"Bother!" he muttered. "Now I wonder where my notebook is?" Then he remembered where he was and laughed shortly at his absent-mindedness.

TUESDAY.

Slowly, thoughtfully, Professor Heston walked from his bedroom to the bathroom. Placing himself under the shower, he stood for a moment thinking. Then, struck by an idea, his hand went to his side, and delving into his pocket, he pulled out his notebook and made an entry.

"Ah!" he mused, smiling to himself, "I didn't forget it this morning!" So saying, he turned on the water. Then, remembering where he was, he laughed shortly at his absent-mindedness.



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LUKEWARM.

- "You don't 'arf look 'ot, you don't!
- " Oo do?"
- "You don't."

A DEED OF DARKNESS. By John Hunter.

THERE is a crunch of boots on the gravel path and for an instant the figure of a man is re-

vealed, only to fade into the gloom once more as heavy clouds obscure the face of the moon.

Furtively he slips through the gate and hurries along the lane, obviously trying to escape detection. Soon he reaches a deserted marl-pit, now filled to a depth of many feet with motionless, slime-covered water, and, looking round to see if he is observed, disappears into the undergrowth surrounding the edge of the pit.

The moon shines forth once more to reveal the man flinging something far out into the centre of the pool. As it falls with a dull splash, he appears on the road once more, but now his whole demeanour is changed, his head is erect, and he strides along boldly, avoiding no one—he has disposed of his old razor-blades.



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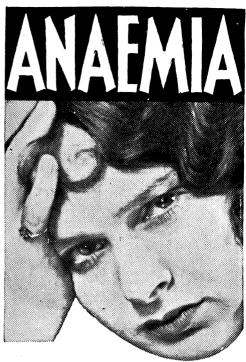


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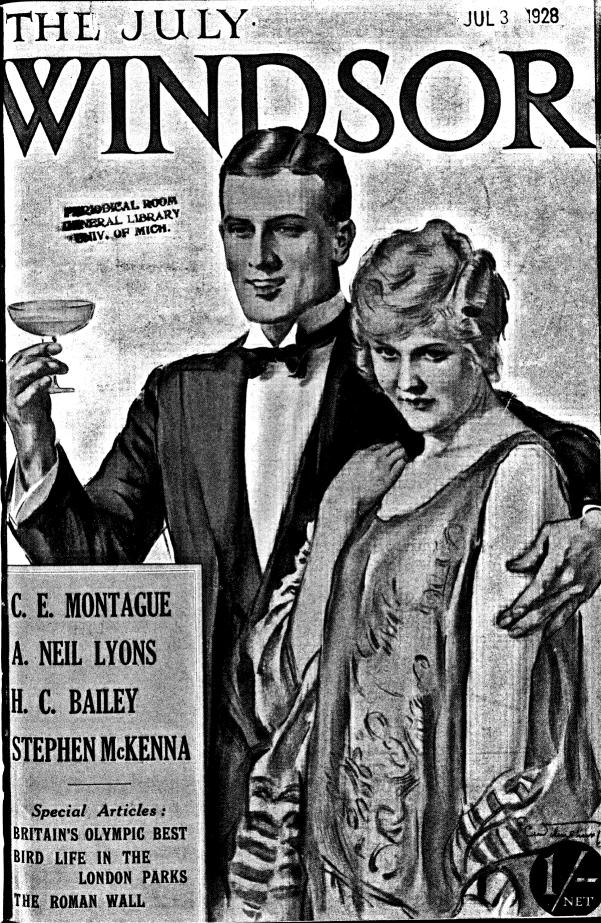
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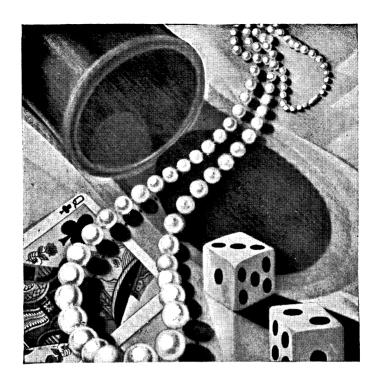
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The Windsor Magazine.

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Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903.

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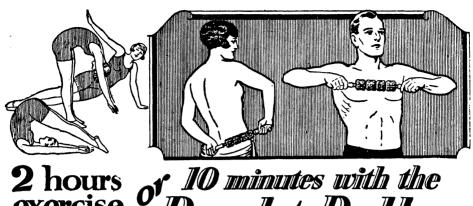
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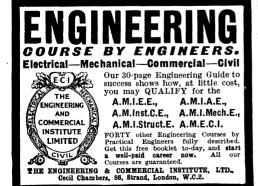
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THE WOMAN IN WOOD • •

• By H. C. BAILEY •

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

HAT summer was a long time dying.
Mr. Fortune came back from bathing in the Bay of Biscay, and being in London, with the languor of holiday still unexhausted, he dallied with old books and furniture and jewels and so was inevitably led to the shop of Aristide Schnorr. That dusky

0

corridor was filled with its usual chaos, and Aristide in his carpet slippers and his red plush smoking-cap was shuffling through it with his usual malignant glare at customers. Mr. Fortune brought a little joy to his sad life by pricing an Etruscan vase and declining to buy it, and moved on past

Saracen armour, side-stepped a stone coffin, and came upon a cabinet in Chinese lacquer, of rich and peculiar ugliness. On the top of it was a woman in wood. He stopped, he drew back a little and contemplated cabinet and woman.

"Oh, my aunt!" he murmured.

Aristide made for him. Aristide began to praise in husky, eager tones the beauty of the cabinet. Mr. Fortune reached up for the wooden woman. She stood in a gown that covered her from neck to bare foot, and the lines of the drapery and the beautiful body beneath were wrought with fine skill. face had a happy calm, like a saint's carved in a church, but it was quick with life, and individual. The full underlip told the truth of some real woman. And Aristide went on praising the cabinet.

"No, I don't think so," Mr. Fortune smiled. He held up the woman in wood.

"What about this, Aristide?"

"The statuette? That is very old. Of the Middle Ages. Thousand years old."

"Oh, Peter!" Mr. Fortune murmured. He held the woman out to Aristide, displaying her pedestal, on which was cut "Art. Dessart fec." The letters were not medi-

Aristide defied him with a sullen, glasseved stare. "One 'undred pound," said

Aristide.

"I think not," Mr. Fortune sighed and put the woman back on the cabinet. Then he sought comfort in the only one of his clubs which understands the art of the grill. He was sitting down to lunch when the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department discovered him.

"Reginald! Why this premature return

to the shop?"

"I'm recovering my nationality. I was gettin' too French. I've been seeing London. Nice restful place. And full of interestin' things, Lomas."

"Is it? I must have a look sometime." Lomas sat down to cold beef. "They tell me Westminster Abbey's quite good.

Not the Abbey. I've seen Aristide. Genial as ever. You don't care for

statuary, do you?"
"No. Not for my humble home. What is this find? An unknown Michael Angelo?"

"No. Style of the Middle Ages. Chartres. She's in wood, she's about two feet high, and she has the look of the best Gothic sculpture. Beautifully simple and reverent and naïve, but wonderful craftsmanship. She ought to be real old work, but of course she isn't. One Art. Dessart made her. He's put his name. He might have cut the letters yesterday. Who is this unknown genius, Art. Dessart? And how the deuce did Mr. Dessart get the mediæval

"Never heard of him."

"Nobody's heard of him. His work wouldn't be lying loose on Aristide's dustheap if they had."

"What did the good Aristide want for

"One 'undred pound," Reggie smiled. "I was going to take another look at her."

Lomas put up an eyebrow. "My dear Reginald! At your time of life! This innocence is affecting. You shouldn't go into these wicked shops alone."

Mr. Fortune was not amused. "You don't believe in her, do you?" he said sadly.

"Come and see her yourself."

But they did not see her. When they arrived at the lacquer cabinet she was

Aristide shambled up. "You want the statuette?" he grinned. "What a pity! I told you, one 'undred pound. Now I sold

"You surprise me, Aristide," said Reggie.

"Who is the happy man?"

"The gentleman that bought it? I do not know him at all. He comes in, he sees the statuette, I say one 'undred pound, he pays me-piff!-like that, he is gone. That's business, Mr. Fortune." malicious grin spread beyond his teeth.

"Yes. I dare say it is. Who is Art. Dessart, Aristide?"

"Art. Dessart? Oh yes, that was on the statuette. That is the sculptor's name, of course. The gentleman also he ask if I know That is not sense. He must be dead hundreds of years."

"Ever seen his work before?"

"No, I do not think. This was great, eh? A ver' fine piece. You miss your chance, Mr. Fortune. What a pity."

"Don't mind me. I was only wondering

where you got it, Aristide."

Aristide laughed. "That is all right. There is not any more. I bought it at Laxmouth: with a ship in a bottle and two china dogs: all in the same lot. There was a little dealer being sold up. I got all that for two pound. That was good business, eh? You like to see the china dogs, Mr.

"I wonder where you'll go when you die,"

said Reggie sadly and wandered out of the shop.

Lomas took his arm. "My poor Reginald," he chuckled. "Look on the bright side. If the other fellow hadn't come along that old ruffian might have rooked you."

"Who is the other fellow?" said Reggie, a little shrill. "Who is the unknown millionaire that sees her and has to have her—piff!—like that—for a hundred pounds? I resent him. He's not reasonable. A sad, strange world, Lomas. I want my tea."

Thus the woman in wood slipped through Mr. Fortune's eager hands. What would have happened if she hadn't is a speculation

of curious interest.

The summer lingered sultry through that September, and he lounged it away between London and his Kentish garden. Towards the end of it Lomas disturbed him there. He turned over in his hammock, he opened his eyes.

"One of the world's workers," said

Lomas.

4" Yes. Yes. I was thinking beautiful thoughts," Reggie murmured and gazed at him with mild, childlike wonder. "Will you have some tea?"

"That was the idea. Also dinner. Also a bed. And perhaps a little breakfast."

"My dear chap! All at once! Had you petter!"

"You're a charming host, Reginald. Some time before you went to sleep you asked me down. I'm afraid I thought you wanted to see me."

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!" Reggie slid from the hammock, dishevelled to his feet. "But of course I did. I do. Especially and particularly. The very man. The trained intelligence. I was only trying to think it out," he smiled happily. "It's very lovely."

"You are incoherent, Reginald," said

Lomas sternly.

"That's shame. I'm all one blush. And dithery. We'll have tea out here." He pressed a button in the syringa, he asked affectionately after Lomas and his ox and his ass and all that was his.

"You are not yourself, Reginald," said Lomas coldly, and rejected cream puffs. "No, thanks. No sweets. Not of any kind. You have something torturing your seared conscience. Tell me all."

Reggie gurgled. "I've got a sister, you know. Speakin' strictly, I have two sisters. This is the livelier one. The one that

married the bishop. Bishop of Laxbury, don't you know. He wears a real apron and Pamela still calls him Bill when there are no clergy present. I tried to, but it made me feel so improper, I call him 'Ahem' now or 'I say.'"

"You drivel, Reginald," said Lomas.

"Well, I was just givin' you the atmosphere. This afternoon, me lying here in the hammock waiting eagerly for you, Sam brought down some letters from London. There was one from Pamela." He gurgled again. "You'd better have it in the original." He felt in his pockets. "You know what a cathedral's like, Lomas?"

"I have seen one."

"Well, imagine you're seeing one now. A great big solemn one. From the close. No trippers about. All as quiet as sleep and the quaint old houses round the old turf lookin' very grave and clerical. Now then. 'Bishop's House, Laxbury, Monday.—My dear child, Are things what they seem or is visions about? Have you had any miracles in Scotland Yard?'" Reggie looked up. "Have you, Lomas?"

"The Home Secretary gave signs of intelligence last week. But it passed off. Go

on with your epistle."

"'Bill says minor canons are not what they were. But I think it's the end of the world. My child, do you remember the Dean? To come to the dreadful truth, do you remember the Dean's wife?'" Reggie paused and looked at Lomas. His face was lit by an awful joy.

"Reginald!" said Lomas sternly.
"What is this? What have you to do with

the Dean's wife?"

"You know, she's just like the Dean. You wouldn't know 'em apart but for the clothes. And the Dean's like a butler, an old, melancholy butler." He read on.

dinner Mrs. Dean goes for a walk in the Bishop's park. It's ritual. Twice round the park in slow time. Last Tuesday some unknown ruffian came up behind and kissed her. Yes, Reggie. He seized her violently and kissed her. Then he ran away. Probably she will never get over it. Nor shall I. She tells me the dreadful story whenever I see her. I regret to add there are sceptics. Mrs. Blythe says she believes in the Dean, of course, but another man! But I'm sure it's quite true. For how could she ever think of such a thing?'"

Lomas lit a cigarette. "I had no idea that cathedral society was so enterprising," he said. "Is there more, Reginald? Do go on."

"'Of course we have no idea who the man of sin was. The Dean, bless him, went to the police and reports that the Chief Constable treated the outrage with deplorable levity. I am told there are shocking speculations among the townspeople. But can you wonder we are perturbed? After this anything might happen. And something else has happened. The Archdeacon has been burgled. It was on Sunday night while they were all at evensong. A man got in by the study window, and when they came back a sermon of the Archdeacon's was scattered all over the place and his peroration had vanished. The Archdeacon seems to feel flattered, but nobody else can imagine why the burglar wanted that. They can't find that he took anything else. There! That's as far as we've got. But what do you suppose will happen next? Of course it's frightfully fascinating, but I'm not sure that I want to live with it. My matronly nerves are not strong enough. I giggle. Do you notice that? It isn't really becoming. I am horribly afraid I shall giggle to Mrs. Dean. One couldn't ever live that down. And I haven't your cherubic face. you, my child. Pamela.'" Reggie looked up. "Then there's a postscript. 'Bill sends his love and says are we ever going to see you. Which is more than you deserve." He put the letter away affectionately and beamed upon Lomas. "Now apply the expert mind. What does the Lord High Detective make of that?"

"Not strictly episcopal," said Lomas, but a very charming letter. In a virtuous

way, I envy the Bishop."

Reggie smiled. "She really has a cherubic face, you know. We used to call her the Age of Innocence. She is still. But it wasn't Pamela that got kissed."

"Brothers have no reverence," Lomas rebuked him. "I deplore this levity, Reginald. Mrs. Brandon is much alarmed."

"Oh yes, Pam's rattled all right," said Reggie happily. "Can you wonder?"

"I do not wonder. I sympathise deeply. Are you a man and a brother? Your duty is clear. Go to Laxbury and soothe her."

"My dear chap, I was going to. I wouldn't be out of this for worlds. It's

something quite recherché."

"It has an air of novelty," Lomas admitted. "That's partly the setting. The incidents in themselves—well, there's no-

thing new in an old lady being kissed. Young bounders do it for a bet or a rag. A burglary with nothing much taken is the commonest kind of burglary. We're only startled because the things happened in a cathedral close."

Reggie nodded. "I know. That's what I said to myself. Quite true and reasonable. I wasn't satisfied. Are you?"

"I was trying to state the case," Lomas said slowly.

"You have. Ordinary little crimes happening in extraordinary conditions aren't

ordinary."

"Quite. The cathedral close is fundamental. The two crimes could only have been committed by someone who knew the habits of the close: knew about Mrs. Dean's evening walk: knew when the Archdeacon's people would be out. The inference is that there's some bold, bad fellow in touch with these cathedral households."

"Yes, I thought of that too," Reggie smiled. "One of the canons livin' a double life. Has a lawless passion for Mrs. Dean and a vendetta against the Archdeacon. Why did he break out all of a sudden last

week?"

"You have a theatrical imagination, Regi-

nald," Lomas sighed.

"If there's some young rascal about the close, he may have been amusing himself with a rag."

"Kissing Mrs. Dean? Not a very nice young rascal. And burgling the Archdeacon was a rag too? Yes. All an idiotic rag. It could be. Do you happen to believe that, Lomas?"

Lomas blew smoke-rings. "I don't advise belief," he said slowly. "We've no evidence that the same man did both things. One might be a vulgar rag, the other a professional crime." He looked curiously at Reggie.

"Thus requiring two rascals both familiar with the close. Well, well, nothing's pro-

bable."

"Nothing." Lomas still watched him. "I notice you don't talk about the most impressive feature of the affair."

"Which is that?"

"The sequence. Close succession in one week of two crimes, where they never have crimes. And the first idiotic."

Reggie stared at him with grave eyes. "The succession. Yes. That struck you too. Yes. Very odd. And baffling."

"Quite. When are you going to your sister's?"

"Oh, one time," Reggie smiled. "I don't want to miss anything."

"Would you like to take a man down?"

"My dear chap! We won't call out the force yet. Me and Sam can deal with these desperate villains. You're takin' it beautiful serious."

"The more I think of it the less I like it," said Lomas slowly.

Reggie gazed at him. Reggie's round and rosy face was solemn with profound thought. "Not claret, then," he murmured. "It isn't too warm for burgundy, is it? I've got some Musigny that makes you feel celestial." And he took Lomas in to a dinner from which he banished the crimes of Laxbury.

Two days afterwards he was there; he was smoking a cigar with the Bishop, who talked of everything else—a large, jovial bishop without a care—till taken away by his chaplain. Then his lordship's wife came into the smoking-room. "What did he say, Reggie?"

"I didn't notice he said anything."

"Dear child!" she sighed. "Of course all he wants is there shouldn't be any scandal. So he thinks if he doesn't talk about it nobody will."

"Yes. I thought I followed the working

of the episcopal mind."

Mrs. Brandon sat down on the arm of his chair. She looked about eighteen. "Don't be horrid," she said, and kissed him. "He's awfully glad to have you here, really. He says you're so discreet. And, you know, they've put a policeman in the close at night now."

Reggie sat up. "Well, what about it? You mean the policeman might be indiscreet? Run Bill in by mistake? Oh, I think not. Even a policeman would notice his gaiters."

"Silly." Mrs. Brandon gave him a reluctant smile. "It's only that we don't want

to have a great fuss."

"You've had a horrible outrage, you've had a burglary. Naturally you get a policeman of nights in this dangerous district.

What's my Lord Bill expect?"

What's my Lord Bill expect?"
"Bill said it was a bad joke h

"Bill said it was a bad joke by a bad joker. He'd like to know who it was, of course. But he'd simply hate a big police case. He'd like you to get at the man quietly."

"Yes. And what's Pam's idea?"

"Oh, I think Bill must be right."

"The good wife," Reggie murmured.
"Not quite the perfect wife. In a few years you'll know Bill is right."

Mrs. Brandon pulled his ears. "You're being superior," she complained. "Reggie! What do you really think about it?"

Reggie gazed at her. "I think I'll begin at the beginning. With the tragic figure of Mrs. Dean. I'd like to see the scene of the crime."

Mrs. Brandon put on her hat in less than half an hour and took him into the Bishop's park. It was a stretch of rough grass with some ancient trees and clumps of modern shrubs enclosed by a low stone wall. They proceeded along a mossy gravel path to a thicket of rhododendrons. "This is the place." Mrs. Brandon stopped. "She had just got here when a man came up behind and took her in his arms and pulled her head back and kissed her. Then he vanished and she hasn't a notion what he was like."

"Yes. What was she wearing?"

Mrs. Brandon gasped faintly. "I really don't know. Oh, a long black cloak, of course. She always does."

"What time was it?"

"Why, just before dinner. They dine at eight. It would be a little after seven."

"After seven. In the dusk. Yes. I wonder."

"What are you thinking of?"

"Well, I was thinking that in the dark all cats are black. One woman in the dusk, in a cloak, from behind, is pretty much like another woman—till you kiss her." Reggie contemplated his sister with a wicked eye. "You wouldn't know that, Pam. Nor would Mrs. Dean. But suppose she was kissed by mistake. It could be. And there's a grateful and comfortin' explanation."

"But who?" Mrs. Brandon objected. "It would have to be someone who knew the close very well. Then he ought to have known Mrs. Dean's habits."

"Yes. Somebody who knew a lot and didn't know everything. I wonder. There was somebody about who'd got information about the ways of the close. The fellow who burgled the Archdeacon. What's the Archdeacon like, Pam? Nice and discreet, like me?"

"He's a dragon officially, but rather a lamb, you know." Mrs. Brandon smiled.

"He loves me."

"Another of 'em!" Reggie smiled. "You have no morals, Pam. Take me to this victim."

The Archdeacon was met, telling a minor canon exactly what he thought of the scholarship of the younger clergy. He had

the face of a persecutor, but under Mrs. Brandon's smile he expanded into a childlike geniality. The minor canon found himself being patted and commended to his bishop's wife and withdrew rather dazed. "My brother, Mr. Fortune," was then presented by the lady. It was too plain that the Archdeacon had never heard of Mr. Fortune, but his heart embraced Mrs. Brandon's brother. Wouldn't they come to tea? They would.

Once inside the Archdeacon's house, Mrs. Brandon remarked that she had been telling her brother about the burglary and he was so interested. The Archdeacon was obviously delighted to talk about anything to Mrs. Brandon. He talked. He took them into his study and showed them the window by which the burglar had entered. He preached a part of the sermon which had been ravaged.

"Only one sheet was missing. And even that sheet he may not have taken. It might have blown away out of window. The rest was sadly scattered. The night was wild, very wild, and he left the window open. servants have come to the conclusion they've lost nothing."

"The servants?"

"It's really rather curious. The only other rooms except this which he disturbed are two of the servants' bedrooms."

"Well, well," said Reggie.

"The Inspector of Police tells me that something must have frightened him before he had finished his—er—job."

"Yes. And did the Inspector say why he began the job with the servants' bedrooms?"

The Archdeacon began to resent this examination. "The Inspector is of opinion, Mr. Fortune, that the burglar went into the servants' rooms by mistake."

"The burglar that took the wrong turning," Reggie murmured. "I wonder."

Mrs. Brandon felt it necessary to smoothe this over. "You see, my brother is a sort of expert in crime," she explained. "He is their scientific adviser (that's right, isn't it, Reggie?), their scientific adviser at Scotland Yard."

"Oh, really!" The Archdeacon was impressed. "Really. That must be work of

terrible interest, Mr. Fortune."

"Yes. Yes. There are things sometimes," Reggie murmured. "The two servants whose rooms were turned outare they on good terms with the other servants?"

" Per-The Archdeacon was shocked.

fectly, Mr. Fortune. I could not wish for a more friendly, kindly household."

"You've had 'em all a long time?"

"For a number of years." The Archdeacon turned to Mrs. Brandon. "Except Dessart, you know."

"Oh, Mary Dessart, of course," she smiled. Reggie gazed at them with round, startled eyes. "Mary Dessart," he repeated. "Any relation to Arthur Dessart?"

"My dear child!" Mrs. Brandon also was

startled. "Did you know him?"

"No. What was he?"

Mrs. Brandon looked at the Archdeacon. "He would probably be described as an architectural sculptor," the Archdeacon began to lecture. "A fine craftsman. A devoted spirit. Arthur Dessart was for many years engaged in restoring the sculpture of the cathedral. He could put into stone the very spirit of the ages of faith. He laboured on here for a modest wage, never seeking a richer sphere, asking only to be allowed to do his best for the cathedral."

"Oh yes. Who was he?" said Reggie. The Archdeacon reflected. "Why, Mr.

Fortune, I should reply that Arthur Dessart was his work. He came here many years ago, found his task in the cathedral and made his home here. This spring he died. I

really know no more of him."

"Yes. I see. Yes, I'm rather interested in Dessart's work, you know. I think I've seen some of it. There was a statuette for sale in London the other day signed Art. Dessart. A woman in wood. Quite out of the way. I wonder would you mind if I asked his daughter about it?"

"A statuette? Really, I had no idea. A woman in wood?" The Archdeacon seemed to think it shocking. "I hardly think that could be Dessart's work. But by all means let us inquire." He rang the bell.

When Mary Dessart answered it, Reggie knew that he had made no mistake. She had that memorable face, tranquil and happy, with the full under-lip which gave it eager life; she had that slim grace of body. She was the woman in wood.

"Oh, Dessart," the Archdeacon was embarrassed, "this gentleman, Mr. Fortune, wanted to ask you about a statuette that was for sale. It had your father's name on it."

"Yes, sir. That would be the wooden woman." She looked at Reggie and he was allowed to see that her large eyes were dark for so fair a skin. "I'm afraid it's sold, sir. It was sold with the rest of our things."

"I'm sorry. It was a wonderful piece of

work. Do you know if your father had ever studied abroad?"

"He never spoke of it, sir. I shouldn't think so." She looked at him again: she seemed to be asking what her father was to him.

"I'm afraid I'm botherin' you," said Reggie plaintively. "I was only wonderin' if I could pick up another piece of his work somewhere. Before he came here—do you know if he had any?"

"I'm sorry, sir, I don't know where he came from. He lived here all my life."

"Thanks very much," Reggie sighed.

"Thank you, sir," said the perfect maid, and the Archdeacon told her to bring tea, and Reggie poured forth small-talk.

But when Mrs. Brandon took him away, "Reggie!" she said in a whisper. "Do you think you've found out something?"

"Oh no. No. I'm sure I haven't."

He went to his room as soon as they got back and rang for his chauffeur. That Cockney visage was of a resigned solemnity. Reggie surveyed it sadly. "Sam, do you use your opportunities?" he said.

"Very quiet place, sir."

"There's some pretty girls about. The Archdeacon's got quite a nice parlourmaid, Mary Dessart."

"I'll look into it, sir." Sam withdrew briskly.

But Reggie was not satisfied. The next morning he gossiped with vergers in the cathedral and old folks in the town, to learn nothing but that Dessart always kept himself to himself. At lunch Mrs. Brandon was surprised to hear that he would have to run up to London. "But, my dear, you've only just come," her pretty mouth reproached him

"I'm coming back all right," said Reggie. He has been heard to speculate how it would have worked out if he hadn't gone.

That night Lomas found Mr. Fortune in his flat drinking potash water. "Good Gad, Reginald. Have you cleared it all up?"

"No. Not wholly. The Archdeacon's parlourmaid is Mary Dessart."

"You surprise me," said Lomas.

"Mary Dessart, daughter of the late Arthur Dessart."

"And what do I do about it?"

"Arthur Dessart was the fellow who made that woman in wood. The statuette that some anonymous fellow bought up in a hurry. The burglar at Laxbury turned out Mary Dessart's room. Somebody's rather interested in the family of Dessart."

"The same fellow that kissed the Dean's wife, perhaps," Lomas smiled.

But Reggie remained serious. "Yes, it could be," he said. "I think in the kissing he got on the wrong target. I shouldn't be surprised if Mary knows something about the kiss. That's why I didn't ask her."

"Oh, Mary Dessart knows something, does she?"

"Well, she has a beckoning eye," said Reggie.

Lomas chuckled. "I'm afraid you haven't made much sense of it."

"No. Not any. Who was Dessart, Lomas? Who are the Dessarts?"

"I never heard the name."

"No. Nobody's heard the name. I've been askin'. It's not in the books."

"You make it seem odd," Lomas frowned. "But it's all guesswork. The statuette may have nothing to do with the burglary. We can make nothing of it as it stands. What do you mean to do next?"

"Go back." Reggie stood up. "I'm going back to have another look at Mary. You look about for Dessarts, Lomas."

Another of the chances in the case which he likes to discuss is what would have happened if he had read the morning papers at breakfast. He usually decides that it would have been fatal. This is, he will point out, a solemn warning against the habit of getting up early. He had only time to eat. He just caught the Wessex express, composed himself, lit a cigar, and so was thirty miles from London before he prepared to take the serious papers seriously. A front-page advertisement caught his eye:

DESSART: Anyone who has knowledge of ARTHUR DESSART, late of Minchampton, Cheshire, is requested to communicate at once with Stanley, Bates and Stanley, 999, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie murmured, looked out of window and looked at his watch. The Wessex express makes its first stop at Laxbury after a three hours' run from London. If only he had read that advertisement in London, he might have brought Stanley or Bates down to Laxbury with him. Bates and Stanley would have a notion of what was happening round Mary Dessart. Other people would read that advertisement. Lomas must be on to it. Somebody from Scotland Yard was probably dealing with Stanley and Bates already. Mary Dessart might see it—or some silly fool would tell her about it—what would she be up to?

And her burglar. An enterprising fellow like that wouldn't miss it. What was his next move?

Reggie stared out at the rushing woods. The express was not going fast enough for

Before they stopped at Laxbury he was on the platform. As he hurried out of the station he came upon his chauffeur. "Sam! Stout fellow! Post office first."

The big car slid away with them.

He put through a trunk call. He caught Lomas. "Fortune speaking. From Lax-

bury. Seen the advertisement?"

"Yes, thank you," said the small, remote "I sent Bell round to Stanley, Bates and Stanley. Quite a good firm. Mr. Bates would only say he was acting on a client's instructions. So Bell was close too. told 'em he thought he might put 'em on to Arthur Dessart's daughter. Mr. Bates was highly interested. Bell's bringing him down to Laxbury to-night."

"Good. Tell him to come to me at the

Bishop's."

Reggie went back to the car. It twisted through the narrow, ancient street.

Sam, how's the parlourmaid?"

"Pretty bit of goods, sir," Sam smiled. "I looked her up last night. Said you thought as you'd left your cigarette case there. We 'ad a 'unt for it together. And very nice too. She knows what's what. But she's all right, I'd 'ave said."

"Not quite sure now?"

"Well, sir, it's what 'appened this morning. This is her day out "

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie moaned. "Has

she gone ?'"

"Yes, sir. That's what I didn't like so When she came out of the house I was 'andy, and I put it to her, my guv'nor being away, I could take her round a bit. Nothing doing. She turned me down good and 'aughty and went off at top speed. Well, that's all right. I didn't bear malice, but I thought I'd better see who she was going with, so I kep' her in sight. She went clean through the town out on the Laxmouth road. By that bit o' wood there was a car waiting with a smart young blood. My lady 'opped A0009, Whitin and off 'e went with 'er. worth two-seater, dark blue."

"A0009. London car, then. If it was the real number. On the Laxmouth side short of the town. Rather a shy car. And it drove away towards Laxmouth. isn't the way to London. I think we'll follow that car, Sam."

"Follow!—'e's got a matter of three hours' start," Sam objected.

The road from Laxbury to Laxmouth runs for some twenty miles through a pleasant, populous country, the coast plain, and then climbs away from the sea to moorland, where villages are not and inns are scarce. with the expression of a wise man on a

fool's errand, let the big car show her speed. Reggie studied the map. "There's a biggish village soon. If it has a garage, stop." It had. A hopeful man in overalls did know of a little blue Whitworth, came from somewhere Laxmouth way, gent had bought petrol there, been buzzing about a month or so. Young gent, a bit flash. Sometimes had another gent with him. Never seen him with a lady. Not sure about the number of the car.

"Laxmouth way," said Reggie as he climbed into the car. "Get on."

"Plenty of little Whitworths about," Sam grumbled. "And 'e wasn't sure about the number, neither."

"I'm not sure about the number myself,"

said Reggie blandly.

Sam's outraged dignity sent the car on at a mile a minute.

They were climbing up to the moor. Fields ended in rough pasture. There was not a house to be seen, only the bare whaleback curves of the moor and the band of the road stretching away into the blue haze of distance; nothing in all those long miles but a labouring steam-lorry.

"Well, well," Reggie murmured.

could do with a little luck."

Sam smiled a cold, contemptuous smile.

"Was you thinking of going on, sir?"

"No. I was thinking of stopping." With more violence than he is wont to use to his beloved car, Sam stopped. The steam-lorry panted up to them and Reggie held out his hand.

"Hullo, mate! What's your trouble?" An oily face grinned through the steam.

"I want to know if a small car has passed you—a two-seater Whitworth, dark blue. Man and woman in it."

"Yus, I seen 'em. They was having a picnic, couple of miles back, I reckon. Down by the brook. Ain't you met 'em, guv'nor? They come back this way. Just before we got up to 'em, they was off. The gel was in a 'urry to go. Like as if Algie had gone a bit too far with 'er." The lorry panted on in a flurry of steam.

Sam swung the big car. "That's queer, sir, ain't it?" he said. "What's the game?"

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. His face was pale. He bent over the map.

"'E ain't took 'er back to Laxbury.

We'd----"

"No. No. He didn't mean her to go back to Laxbury. I thought that... Look here." Reggie's finger moved on the map. "We'll try this second lane. It runs down to the sea."

"The sea?"

"Well, he's taking her somewhere. And he's found the moor a bit populous. Get on."

The car shot forward, swept round the lorry and devoured the humming miles, took the corner into the lane as Sam had taken none in all his blameless life, and filling that narrow track from bank to bank, surged on round winding curves. Steep banks and bushes meeting overhead made the lane a tunnel: suddenly in the gloom it dived down on an Alpine angle, and beyond the gloom was the gleam of the sea. Sam and his brakes availed. The car slid into the sunlight on the turf above the beach and there stopped.

"Look at that, now. We've got 'im proper." For

there stood a blue two-seater.

"Yes. Look at the number," said Reggie: it was PA0003. Sam said that he was condemned. "Yes. I'm afraid they've made all their arrangements. However——"

Under the rising ground stood a horrible bungalow, such a bungalow as is built in pleasant places by people of no conscience to let to people of no sense. Reggie arrived at its door, and as he came a grey face looked out of the window and vanished. He knocked, he tried the door and found it locked. He moved on to the window and heard a shout from Sam. Two men came out of the back of the house carrying a sack between them. At a stumbling run, for the sack was heavy, they plunged down the shingle. A small motor-boat was beached just above the falling tide.

Sam came out of the car and roared after them. Reggie ran round the bungalow, saw them, caught up the chopper from their wood pile for a weapon and followed. They flung the sack into the boat, they were running her down to the water, and Sam arrived and grasped the gunwale. The younger man turned and kicked at his stomach and he went down cursing and groaning. The boat was sliding into the water when Reggie came. He grabbed at the sack. As the boat went away from him it came over the side into his

arms, a limp dead weight. The younger man splashed round to him. Reggie dropped the sack and swung up the wood chopper. "Where will you have it?" he cried.

The man flinched, turned and ran with the boat into the sea, and as she went Reggie drove the chopper at her bows. The timbers crashed, she swung broadside on to the shore, but the force of the blow set her afloat. They tumbled in, they shoved her off, they had the engine going, she throbbed away.

"And that's that," Reggie murmured: a moment he watched the boat, then turned to the sack and, struggling, lifted it out of reach

of the tide.

Sam came to him white and gulping. "Dirty swine," he spat. "Excuse me, sir. My oath, and they got away!" He looked at the sack, he swallowed. "That'll be 'er?"

Reggie's knife was slitting the sack open. Two large stones rolled out of it. Then appeared the legs of Mary Dessart, her tumbled clothes, her white face. The hat was dragged back from her brow and a rumpled mass of hair broke from it. She did not move.

"Done 'er in," Sam said hoarsely. "The swine! Oh, the swine! And I let 'em get off in their dam' boat! I say, sir, didn't we ought to put the police on to it quick? That boat's got to come in somewheres an'——"

"Drat the boat," said Reggie. He had the girl's neck bare. He was bent close to

ier bosom.

"What is it, sir?" Sam cried. "Ain't

she dead?"

"No. She's not dead yet." Reggie took off his coat. "This is chloroform. Get the brandy out of the car, then pick up some of these gulls' feathers." He moved the girl on to the slope of the beach with her head lower than her heels. He fell to work on her.

Sam ran back. "Lemme do it, sir. I

know this game."

"Burn your feathers under her nose," Reggie grunted. "Then see if you can get a spot of brandy in." It was done, and he laboured on. . . .

"I say, sir," Sam cried. "The boat's coming back." Reggie looked over his shoulder. "I'll swear it is. They got her turned to the land and it's larger than what it was. Look. Only it's dipping in the waves."

"Is that so?" Reggie mumbled and worked on at the girl's lungs. . . .

A startled cry came from Sam. "My oath! It's gone! It ain't there!"



"'Well, well, said Reggie. 'You take a spell with her now. She's just coming round. Go steady.'"

"Well, well," said Reggie.

"They're swimming for it. I see one of their heads just now. The blooming boat must ha' sunk under 'em."

Reggie looked over his shoulder. "A long swim," he said.

"Ain't anything we can do, is there?"

spell with her now. She's just coming round. Go steady."

"Right, sir. I know the motions. Ah, fine piece, ain't she? And those devils—well, they got theirs quick. . . . Funny the boat doing 'em down like that. They had it all so neat, you'd think



"No. There's nothing to do. Except

this." Reggie worked on. . . .

"I reckon they're gone, sir," Sam said in a low voice. "I never saw but one 'ead, and I ain't seen that this long while."

"Well, well," said Reggie. "You take a

they made sure their boat was all right."

"I dare say it was. Till we came along."

"What, you mean it was broke in the turn up on the beach?"
"Well, I got one in with their wood-

chopper on the bows. I had hopes." "You 'ad 'opes!" Sam gasped.

"Yes, I thought it might start a seam or

"You sent 'em off to drown!" Sam let the girl's arms go and sat back on his

haunches.

"I didn't make 'em go, you know," said Reggie mildly. "But if they would go, I had to do what I could." He bent over the

"Them driving on with a leaking boatand dursn't turn back for the beach—not till

it was all up with 'em, anyway!"

"Yes. Yes. Their error," said Reggie. Sam stared at him and his careful, gentle "And you working on at the girl while they was drowning out there!"

"Yes. As you say," Reggie murmured. "Everyone provided for. Shut up now. She's coming round. Give me the brandy.

Mary Dessart, still knowing little of what was done to her or who did it, was wrapped up inside the big car. "Well, Sam? How are your nerves now?" Reggie smiled. "Fit to drive?"

They went back to Laxbury furiously.

Not till the car was turning into the close did Sam speak again. Then he was calm and correct. "Where are you taking 'er, sir? The Archdeacon's?"

"No. Try the Bishop's," said Reggie.

He hurried in and was asking for Mrs. Brandon when she met him in the hall. "Have you got a spare room ready, Pam?"

"Oh yes, if you want—who is it for?"

- "Mary Dessart. She's had a rather nasty accident and we picked her up. Do you mind? She ought to be where she can be looked after for a bit. Can I bring her in ? "
 - "But of course."
- "You're an angel. Now we'll carry her up and you'll put her to bed. Don't let her talk. She's had a bit of a shock. Then I'll have a look at her."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brandon; but her pretty face was anxious. "Reggie, she will be all

right?"

"Oh yes. Everything all right."

"There won't be any more trouble?"

"No. No. That's all arranged. Quite nice and quiet. Same like the Bishop wanted."

Some time after Reggie came out of Mary Dessart's room. He found the Bishop with Mrs. Brandon, and the Bishop was less brotherly than usual. The Bishop's majestic presence stood in front of the fire.

"How is the poor girl, Reggie?" said the

Bishop in a voice of doom.

"Thank you, Bill. We're doing as well as can be expected." Reggie smiled. "I wonder if I could have my tea, Pam?"

"My dear boy!" She sprang up and

rang the bell.

"You apprehend no unfortunate consequences?

"Oh no, no. Something hot and buttery,

please."

The Bishop frowned. "Pamela assures me that you are confident we shall have no more of these recent untoward incidents."

"Oh no. All over now."

"I should tell you that already two people have called to see you—a Mr. Lomas and

"Oh, my aunt! Where is he?"

"And a Mr. Bates," the Bishop continued. "They are waiting for you in the library.

"Send my tea in there, Pam." Reggie

made for the door.

"I venture to hope, Reggie, that there are no unpleasant affairs to be transacted here."

Reggie waved his hand. "Don't worry.

Don't you be worried, Pam."

In the library Lomas sat with a large oldfashioned man. "Lomas, my dear old thing, what zeal!"

"I thought I'd come down myself." He introduced Mr. Bates, who was ceremonious to Mr. Fortune, and said that Mr. Lomas had been very good, and there were important issues and it was a complicated affair.

"Yes. Yes. We noticed that. Begins with the family of Dessart, doesn't it? Who

was Arthur Dessart, Mr. Bates?"

"I understand that you have evidence of the death of Arthur Dessart?"

"Oh yes. He's dead all right. And his daughter's alive. Who was he?"

"The identity can be established?"

- "Somebody's been trying hard to establish it. Mary Dessart was nearly murdered to-day."
 - "God bless my soul!" said Mr. Bates.
 - "Did you get the man?" asked Lomas.
- "No. There were two. Young fellow, rather a blood, dark and lean, loose mouth. Old fellow, chin-tuft and moustache, same loose mouth. That suggest anything to you, Mr. Bates?"

Mr. Bates cleared his throat. "It suggests very grave possibilities, Mr. Fortune." He thought about them. "I see that it becomes my duty to put all the facts before you. The Dessart family is wealthy, chiefly

from urban land in Lancashire. The late Mr. Roger Dessart had one son, Arthur. Mr. Dessart was a man of very strong character and his home was not happy. On reaching manhood Arthur quarrelled with him. I am not fully advised of the causes, but I understand that Arthur resented his father's treatment of his mother. He also wished to follow an artistic career. His mother tried to persuade him to submit to his father's wish that he should enter politics. The result was that he left home on terms of hostility to both parents. That was in '89. From that time they have heard nothing of him. His father made no effort to trace him and in fact remained bitter against him to the end. His mother did not venture to act, but I fear she has always reproached herself for her failure to help her son. In June of this year Mr. Dessart died. Everything was left to his wife for her life with remainder to his next of kin."

"Yes. Who were they?" said Reggie. Mr. Bates began to speak and stopped. The butler was coming in with tea. Reggie dispensed it. Reggie subsided comfortably with a toasted scone.

"You asked who were they," said Mr. Bates solemnly. "Mr. Dessart believed his next of kin to be Christopher Dessart and his son, Cecil Dessart. And I am bound to tell you that when you described the men who attacked this young lady you described them to the life. I fear this is to be a most unpleasant affair, Mr. Fortune."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," Reggie smiled.

"Have a scone."

"Thank you, no. Nothing to eat. Mrs. Dessart clung to the hope that her son might be alive or might have left children. has been very urgent with us to make endeavours to trace him."

"You ought to have come to us, you know," Lomas frowned.

Mr. Bates bowed. "I regret that I did not. But you will understand my position. I could not suppose that Arthur Dessart was in any way known to the police. Even now I do not understand what attracted your attention to this Mary Dessart."

"Well, it was the woman in wood," Reggie smiled. "And the Dean's wife and one thing and another." Mr. Bates breathed "Yes. What was the late Arthur

Dessart's form of art?"

"I understand that he desired to be a sculptor."

"And Christopher and Cecil—any artistic tastes in them?"

Mr. Bates blinked. "Dear me, they're not artists at all. But Mr. Christopher Dessart has always been a collector, you know."

"Yes. Quite so. Now we'll clear it all up." Reggie took another scone. "Christopher, believin' himself the heir to the Dessart property, suddenly came up against a wooden statuette signed Art. Dessart. He bought it up quick; he set himself to trace Arthur, and that brought him down here. He found Arthur Dessart was dead but had left a daughter behind. She was parlourmaid at the Archdeacon's. The next point for him was whether Mary knew anything. A job for Cecil. Rather a rogue with women, wasn't he?"

"I am bound to say his reputation is not

good."

"I thought so. Cecil came down and began making love to the pretty parlourmaid. I'm afraid she rather liked it. But she has a head on her shoulders. She went slow. Also she has a sense of humour. Lucky for her. When he got very pressing, she said she'd be in the Bishop's park at dusk. That's when the Dean's wife walks there. Cecil went and pounced on Mrs. Dean and kissed her. Very happy incident."

"Really, I don't follow you," said Mr.

Bates.

"You see, it attracted attention. It attracted my attention. Well, Cecil wasn't getting on. He couldn't find out what Mary Dessart knew about her father. So he decided to have a look for her papers. there was a burglar at the Archdeacon's one night who rummaged her room. He didn't find her papers. She hasn't any. But that was our second bit of luck. It gave me an idea. So I set my man to look after Mary. Cecil wasn't giving up. He had to make sure of her. He fixed up a day out with her in his little car. And then you blew in with your advertisement. That made up their minds for 'em. If they didn't get Mary good and quick you would. Cecil took her out to picnic with him on the moor and asked her to run away with him. He swore he'd marry her. Perhaps he meant to. But I wouldn't bet on it. She wouldn't go. She has a head. So they had to deal with her otherwise. Cecil got her into the car to come back here, said he'd run out of petrol and took her round to their bungalow to fill up. They had everything worked out very neat. There was a little motor-boat ready. They gave her chloroform and tied her up in a sack with some stones. They were just going to push off when we came along. Well, we got her, and we didn't get them."

"They went off in the boat?" said

Lomas.

"Yes. Yes. Right out to sea."

"Damme, they've got to land somewhere. We ought to get them yet."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "Have you warned the police?"

Reggie looked at him with dreamy eyes. "No. No. I wasn't worryin' about them any more. I had the girl."

"What a terrible story!" Mr. Bates sighed. "My dear sir, I do trust the poor

girl will recover."

"Oh yes. Yes," Reggie beamed. "She's looking quite spring-like. She'll make a

picture of an heiress."

Mr. Bates gasped. "Really—you must forgive me—but you are very confident, Mr. Fortune. We have not much evidence."

"My only aunt! Evidence! Christopher and Cecil are pretty good evidence, aren't they?"

"In a way, certainly, in a way."

"Yes. I don't think they'll turn up to deny she's the next of kin."

"But legally——"

"Oh, my dear fellow! There's Arthur Dessart's signature in the wage-books here. Umpteen years of signatures. They knew that all right. There's your identity."

"You are very quick, sir," said Mr. Bates.

"Oh no. No. Not quick. Only careful," Reggie smiled. "Anything else you want?"

"I want those two scoundrels," said

Lomas.

"Sorry. Not in my department," Reggie murmured. "I want the woman in wood."

At this hour she stands by his favourite

NEXT MONTH-"THE PINK MACAW."

"Well," said Mr. Fortune, gazing benignly at the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, "the deceased had on his chest a pink macaw."

"A what?" Lomas gasped.

- "A macaw. Pink. In a pattern. . . . It didn't grow there."
- "Thank you. Very interesting. And what am I supposed to do with it?"

"Think it over. I told you to think it over before."

But all the thinking over would not have sufficed to clear up the mystery of the millionaire's death but for Mr. Fortune's uncanny instinct.

A story that will delight every lover of good fiction.

THE WORD.

WHEN Thames was high a stranger stood
And stared about on every side:
He saw the low-arched bridges which bestride
That ruffled flood.

He saw, clear-cut against light cloud, Towered buildings of imperial fame, Saw each—his knowledge named it with a name That makes the nations proud.

Behind, the ceaseless wheels were swift, And in the wave moved tug and barge: The stranger gazed on all with mind at large; His senses seemed adrift.

I lent an ear, when with surprise A murmur from his lips I heard: "London!" was his reiterated word, And tears stood in his eyes.

MICHAEL WILSON.

MISS BROWN'S BABY •

By A. NEIL LYONS

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

WO people—a man and a woman—were walking in East London. They were strangers to that place, and the strict aloofness of their respective shoulders seemed to proclaim that they were all but strangers one to another. This they indeed had been, having, for some years, sustained a mere friendship. The exaggerated estrangement of this moment was that which always grips the breath of sensitive people before the dreaded, longed-for moment of cohesion.

Women remember this moment all their lives. Men refuse to admit that it ever existed. For no man will ever confess to moral hesitancy.

It was a moist and sticky day in June, when sullen showers and a sullen sun cooperate to stifle sound and colour. But as
these two emerged from a dark street into
a relatively open space both sound and
colour greeted them. The clock of old
Stepney Church chimed three and the
haze about old Stepney Church was lit up
by a rainbow.

Conscious of the oddity of their new relationship, they stood apart and gazed at sky and clock. No confession had been uttered and yet it stirred the very air. Amid an aching silence, the woman slowly turned her head and looked at him. Then she asked an irrelevant question:

"Whatever are those children doing there?"

The man looked at a paved corner of the churchyard, where five small girls with dirty knees were slowly revolving face to back, hands to shoulder, in a slow and circular procession. In doing so, they looked up at the rainbow and sang a child-like, aged song, of which so many are remembered in these over-crowded haunts of childhood.

The man spoke listlessly. "I don't know. It's folklore, you know. An old game. An old song."

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"But what a decent, lovely game," the woman said. Her lips were parted and her eyes alight as she drank the picture and the song.

Slowly, gravely, the children marched about, singing these words to the rainbow:

"Mary's ladder, Mary's ladder Let down from on high: A lady and a baby Are climbing to the sky."

The man listened, too; but he listened, as it were, to an undertone. Louder than the children's chorus, louder than the bassdrum pounding at his heart, rose the music of her cry.

This was her first visit to a land and people of which he was a self-elected citizen. He had, in other days, brought other women to these scenes. These women had sometimes sniffed and sometimes giggled. But none like she had merely sought—and found. Those three impertinences—Pity, Patronage and Pride—could not abide within her friendly heart. She walked in that dense atmosphere, among banana-skins and oaths and jellied eels, like an honoured guest in some old city of the past.

The rainbow faded. The children stopped their game and resumed their work—which consisted of playing marbles, for blood and bein

"What does it mean, that game?"

Slowly, he realized that the woman had spoken and, suddenly, that she had challenged him. For he was by profession a story-teller, or novelist, and to ask a man of that vocation to explain a mystery is like challenging a watch-maker to tell you the time.

"I know what it means all right. But they don't."
"Who don't?"

"No fear."

"But you could tell me?"
"Yes," the man admitted, "I could tell



"Five small girls with dirty knees were slowly revolving face to back, hands to shoulder, in a slow and circular procession."

you, but I doubt . . . You see, I've only old Cozenza's word for it."

[&]quot;The children."

[&]quot;Then couldn't you tell them?"

- "Who is old Cozenza?"
- "A man with an enormous, dyed moustache."
- "Was Mr. Cozenza born at sea?"
- "Obviously. His moustache proves that. Walrus blood, you know."



"Where does he live?"

"Here. He is a native of this parish. It is the largest parish in Britain, you know, because every infant born at sea in a British ship is registered in the parish of Stepney."

it is a long one and here's the rain again."

"We'll sit down there," said the woman, pointing to a seat in Stepney churchyard.

So there they sat, severely separate, in a soft but sooty rain; while the man with

many pauses and much tautology-the mother of invention—brought forth his tale. It was derived, he repeated, from a Mr. Cozenza, who stated that its events took place in the year 1926 and in the month of June, when racing at Ascot, and a coal-

strike, had rendered London empty. Here, set out in formal

terms, is the story which he

told:

The clock of old Stepney Church had just struck but Mr. Cozenza three; was only now about to partake of what he called his Although it was an airless, sticky afternoon in June, Mr. Cozenza moistened this repast with gulps of scalding cocoa. Some corrosive drops of this liquid communicated themselves to his worn, black tie and to the bronzed silk lapels of his black frock-coat.

Mr. Cozenza was not a prosperous man, and his wife had left him, together with his youth, his teeth and his illusions. Yet he possessed an innate warmth of nature which kept at bay the dogs of gloom. He was humming a melody even now, amid surroundings which would have depressed a cat and in face of aliment which would have poisoned her.

The table at which he sat was covered with a black cloth, of satinette or some such material, on which was set out the furniture of his meal. This furniture was simple. It consisted of a large enamelled jug, from which arose the greasy steam of cocoa; a battered cruet; cutlery; a penny roll; a covered plate

and, finally, a pint mug. The mug was of thick, white earthenware, with bronze embellishment, and it was provided with a sort of passenger or dickey seat for the accommodation of Mr. Cozenza's thick, espaliered

moustache.

The amenities of the little room were simple. They comprised a few stiff chairs, upholstered in black horsehair; a black marble mantelpiece; a black marble clock. Also a small sideboard, on which reposed Mr. Cozenza's old black hat and two bronze



Mr. Cozenza removed the cover from his plate, and exposed a cut of roast beef, amid the tepid sauce whereof potatoes slowly hardened, in combination with spring cabbage and asparagus. Mr. Cozenza greatly relished the shoots of this fern; but, like but well kept. She wore a clean white

apron, beneath which her hands supported

other inhabitants of Stepney, he had never tasted it in any form other than that of the stewed associate of beef and gravy.

as he took up his knife and fork. David Skinner stood in the doorway: David, Mr. Cozenza's trusted foreman and chief of staff.

some small burden, so artlessly concealed A door faced the diner and this was opened that its existence was manifest almost to the blind. She belonged evidently to the class which until Victory smiled upon our arms would have been called "working." "Guv'," said David, "Miss Brown has



"'Now, now!' exclaimed her host, forking a potato. 'A woman o' your age, Mrs. Peel! I'm surprised.'

however, he reopened it. "Sorry to disturb ya, Guv', but there's a party to see you: Mrs. Peel."

"Come in, Mrs. Peel," said Mr. Cozenza. Mrs. Peel came in. She was a thick-set, grim, unsmiling woman, not quite middleaged. Her clothes were out of fashion "I've brought the little parcel, sir," said

Mrs. Peel, beginning to cry.

"Now, now!" exclaimed her host, forking a potato. "A woman o' your age, Mrs. Peel! I'm surprised."

Mrs. Peel dabbed at her eyes. "I know I'm foolish, sir. Mother of six, and all. Same time, it do dis'earten anyone to be beat by common convulsions. Arter three

mumphs' warfare, too!"

"I know," responded Mr. Cozenza, articulating thickly through wads of cabbage and potato. "But you don't wanter 'arp on the subject."

"Ya see," said Mrs. Peel, "it ain't as if I was an Ovice. This here is my seventh."

She withdrew her right hand from its nest beneath the apron, and brought forth a package. A compact little oblong, wrapped in brown paper and tied with string.

"Here's the little parcel, sir."

"Thank ya," said Mr. Cozenza. "But don't put it there. I'm 'avin' my dinner."

Mrs. Peel caught up the parcel as Mr. Cozenza thumped the table. The round, unquestioning face of David appeared in the doorway.

"Take this little parcel round the corner," said Mr. Cozenza. "It's a company parcel,

"Yes, sir." David put forth a hand, and Mrs. Peel gave him the parcel, having first kissed it.

As David withdrew, Mr. Cozenza swallowed a deep draught of cocoa. Lowering the mug, his eye above its rim attracted the eye of Mrs. Peel.

"Now, then!" he exclaimed. "You're

cryin' again."

"I ain't cryin'."
"You are."

"Well, then, Mr. Cozenza. What of it?"

"Nothing at all," replied the diner, "on'y it spoils my dinner." He raised his fork, to the prong of which a fragment of potato was attached. "You oughter have learned better, Mrs. Peel."

"It's the disgrace," she moaned.

"Now," said Mr. Cozenza, "you're talkin' wild. Disgrace? None at all! A 'ealthier woman,, a carefuller mother, don't live in Stepney. If this one has died on you, there's 'arf a dozen others, live and active, to tell the story."

"Oh!" gulped Mrs. Peel. "Oh, Mr.

Cozenza! Oh!"

"Now, then!" growled the epicure.

She put down three half-crowns. "I'm sure if anyone could cheer up anyone, you could. There's the money, sir, and I 'ope you'll find a cosy corner for the little thing. Not with a man, please."

"I don't want that money," said Mr.

Cozenza. You can keep it."

She picked up the three coins, rubbing

them anxiously between her thumb and finger. "But, sir, you got to take your money. We all got to live. Suppose I had took the—the—the little parcel to old Dumphrey?"

"Mr. Dumphrey?" (he slightly emphasised the prefix) "would ha' pleased himself. But it is against my principle to charge for these little—items. Not, at least, when they are *company* items."

His visitor lifted a corner of her apron

and opened her mouth.

"You stop that, I tell ya!" shouted Mr. Cozenza. "And shove off, like a good girl. You can come back this evening—after eight o'clock—and see the—the arrangements."

Mrs. Peel, suppressing her thanks and her emotion, bobbed silently and left him.

David Skinner received his master in the workshop next door. This was a spacious apartment, roof-lit, smelling sweetly of cedar wood and of the shavings of oak and elm. Planks of varied thickness and dimensions were stacked against the wall, while others, in process of preparation, were clamped to benches. The finished products of Mr. Skinner's art were disposed about the "shop" on trestles. These were coffins: for Mr. Cozenza was, of course, an undertaker. In an adjoining workshop two other employees of Mr. Cozenza were occupied with cloth and braid and "brads," in padding other coffins. Quoth David:

"Miss Brown's coffin is finished, Guv'nor,

and has been took to the mortuary."

"Thank ya, David," said his employer, walking into a little yard which gave access

to the repository in question.

Here Mr. Cozenza remained for some time, and when at last he returned to the workshop there was an added solemnity in his demeanour. He paused at David's bench to utter one of his rare expressions of sentiment.

"I wish there was someone beknown to that Miss Brown as could look at her now. I've never see the *woman* come out so strong in any spinster's face. She looks a lot younger, too, and the baby looks a picture. I lay as that poor Mrs. Peel 'ull be touched to see 'cm."

"I lay she will," said David.

Miss Brown had been one of those odd little women who are to be found in all slums. She was what is called in Stepney "an educated woman," and having certain obscure but regular means of subsistence, had for years dwelt among the lowly and unclean, doing what she conceived to be "good works." She propagated an up-to-date gospel, called Anglo-Somethingism; but she exercised an old-fashioned virtue, called Charity. Charity, I mean, not largesse. Her feet were deformed, from incessant walking in odd, ill-fitting boots;

her lips were white for lack of food; her eyes all dimmed for want of sleep. She gave her prayers to hungry men and her pence to hungry women; but to hungry babies she gave the blood out of her She was bosom. what in Svria was called a Christian, but what in London, to-day, we should term a fanatic.

Generally speaking, her presence among this sweating tumult had been disregarded. She existed as a golden needle might exist in a heated haystack, and, like such an atom, she was finally consumed.

And being consumed, she was forgotten, save by three gentlemen named Cleaver, Cleaver and Cleaver, of Lincoln's Inn, who had, by letter, requested Mr. Cozenza to inter the little woman at a cost not exceeding twenty pounds.

Such was Miss Brown, who now lay dead, with a baby at her breast.

This baby, née Peel, looked like a baby who merely slumbered, but whose sleep was troublesome. His little poll was covered with a silken down and his minute fingernails were white and tapered. Death was

herein more merciful than life, which (in Stepney, at any rate) plays Hell with the finger-nails.

Mrs. Peel, in securing a "company" burial for her child, acted in conformity with a custom which is often followed by unhappy mothers in the capital city of our



"She gave her prayers to hungry men and her pence to hungry women."

Empire. But such transactions are not often conducted openly. The undertaker's man rather than his dignified principal (blind for the occasion in one eye) is the usual recipient of these little parcels; and a mother's gratitude, plus seven and sixpence, is the accepted honorarium.

Miss Brown and her baby, if Mr. Cozenza's word may be believed, lay very snug in their nest of white and purple. Miss Brown, whose grey hair had been formed into two plaits, was clad in a flannel nightdress, which constant washing had rendered the colour of old ivory. The baby wore a

Mr. Cozenza.

"Mrs. Peel, on arriving at eight o'clock to view these - arrangements, was affected deeply. She had brought a bunch of scented stock.'

white christening-robe, which, having previously officiated at seven christenings and seven churchings and innumerable secular occasions, showed signs of wear. But it was "launder white," and emphasised the transparent parchment of Miss Brown's encircling arm.

Mrs. Peel, on arriving at eight o'clock to view these - "arrangements," was affected deeply. She had brought a bunch of scented stock, and having strewn all but a single cluster within the coffin, offered this one to

"Wouldn't ya like to drop a flower in, sir?"

Mr. Cozenza shook his "That's flower head. enough," he said, in his hardest voice, as he pointed to her child.

Mrs. Peel, depositing the final blossom, blushed like a bride. Then, turning away, she asked him to cover the coffin.

Mrs. Peel returned home happy. Happy, that is to say, in that dim fashion which is the offspring of grief beguiled. But by noon of the following day this — even this — grey solace had been wrested from her.

She came to Mr. Cozenza all tear-stained and bestraught. "There's a funny thing has happened, sir," she said. "A very funny thing, and I must ask you to disturb Miss Brown again—poor lady! -and take away my little one.''

"Eh?" cried Mr. Cozenza. "Eh? What's this?"

"Take away my little one," repeated Mrs. Peel.
"It seems as poor Miss Brown turned Catholic. An hour before she died the priest was called, to bless her over, and she turned Catholic.

"Well?" said Mr. Cozenza.

"You see, sir," Mrs. Peel explained, "this-

this arrangement can't go on, not now. I don't uphold no sect myself though brought up Protestant, and all our children too. But common sense will tell you this: we can't both parties be right. If Miss Brown and all the other Catholics are going to Heaven, then my poor little one'll be took down somewhere else. Then, look at it the other way. If we are right and all them Catholics wrong, then my poor little boy will go to Heaven and—— Well, you see what I mean, sir. Right is right."

"But I don't see," protested Mr. Cozenza.

"I'm like yourself: I don't uphold no side. But if right is right and wrong is wrong, then the right will win. What odds do it make whatever graveyard company your little fellar keeps? If he's in the right of it, he'll be all right. If he's in the wrong of it, he'll be all wrong. What do it matter who lays along of him in Kensal Green?"

"It matters this much," said Mrs. Peel.
"If one is right, then the other will be wrong and they'll have to walk separate in the next world. But, if you parks my little one with a Protestant, then at least

they'll keep together."

"How's that going to help him if they're

both on 'em wrong?"

"Help him? A lot. He ain't big enough to travel lonesome, not even up to Heaven. He can't speak. He can't hardly cry. On'y a woman can find out what he wants, and then it's on'y by the look in his eyes. And he can't keep nothin' down."

"Then," said Mr. Cozenza, musing deeply, it's company you're set on, whether above

or below?"

"That's right," assented Mrs. Peel. "If on'y I'd had the sense to turn the little chap a Catholic, he could have stayed with Miss Brown, and more than welcome."

"Even—even"—Mr. Cozenza faltered— "even if the verdict was—damnation?"

"Yes," cried Mrs. Peel. "Decidedly yes!— With such as her to hold his hand."

"But seein' how they must be parted there, then your idea is—part them here and make sure of company in the future?"

"That's it, sir."

Mr. Cozenza knit his brows in thought, tilting back his tall black hat. He was dressed in the full regalia of grief, for Miss Brown was to start on her last journey in fifteen minutes. At last, picking up a screw-driver, Mr. Cozenza spoke.

"You must have your own way, then. There's old Mrs. Roper there"—he indicated with his thumb a heavily decorated coffin which stood in a corner of the mortuary

chamber. "Mrs. Roper don't go out till to-morrow. She was a good woman—in her way. Kept the 'Golden Fleece,' in Ben Jonson Road—a fully licensed 'ouse. A proper Protestant she was—'ated all religions."

Mrs. Peel averted her eyes while Mr. Cozenza plied his screw-driver. Then, at the sound of a sudden exclamation, she turned. The undertaker was gazing, with manifest confusion, into the open coffin. Mrs. Peel, staring in her turn, shared his confusion. For the bodies of Miss Brown and her baby had disappeared, leaving behind them their mere corporeal attributes. There were Miss Brown's ivory-coloured cerement, the baby's little white robe, some scattered flowers, and two short pieces of black tape, which had formed the terminal ligature of Miss Brown's two grey plaits.

The undertaker and his client gazed at each other in amazement—and fear. Then, with a movement almost uniform, they lifted their heads and listened, as the sound of children's voices reached them faintly from the street. The children were singing an old-time song, the words of which had been familiar to Mrs. Peel and Mr. Cozenza in their respective infancies. They turned instinctively to the doorway and, peering upward to the patch of blue sky which roofed the little yard, they there beheld a rainbow—Mary's ladder—shining in the sky.

"Cover the coffin, sir," said Mrs. Peel, as she covered her eyes.

The man had finished his story, but the woman beside him neither spoke nor moved. She sat in silence, her chin lifted, staring at a rainbow in the sky. For this was a day of rainbows. But at last, still motionless, she spoke, saying in a level voice:

less, she spoke, saying in a level voice: "Won't you give me back my hand,

now?

He started; conscious, quite suddenly, of something which felt like a crushed rose tightly compressed within his palm.

"Give it back?" he stammered. "Bu

—— But why ? "

The hand within his own hand stirred and quickened, as his companion, still staring at their rainbow, made answer:

"Only for a second. I want to find my hankie."

OXXX

PA10

" May he dream of the Devil and wake in a fright." -Old Curse.

S I walked to our village to-day, after breakfast, a big and handsome tramp was lying asleep on the strip of hot grass by the road. The high midsummer sun shone benedictively down on the man's upturned face. But the face was troubled. Neither beer nor skittles could possibly have been the theme of that fellow's dreams. An hour later I came back that way. The wanderer still slept. But he had rolled over on his front. His face was buried in the grass as a child buries his in a cushion, to shut out the sight of some frightful object.

I had to go down to the village again after luncheon. The tramp was sitting up now, with his back to a low wall of stones. He looked a degree more professional, too: he gave me good-day in the coming-on manner of competent tramps; nor did he hide a pipe which needed only tobacco and a match in order to achieve the highest purpose of its being. To render it easy for others to do what you wish is the essence of all diplomacy. This practitioner of the business made it perfectly easy for me to produce my pouch, followed by my matches, to hand them to him and then to fill my own pipe and to take a seat on the wall, not far from his head. But all this he did in a half-absent way, like a man who is waiting for some momentous hour to strike while he gives perfunctory chat to people round him.

Somebody in Homer says that all tramps come from God. I am not quite so sure. But some of them still talk the good English that tastes like a nut, though the schools and the Press are scouring it so swiftly off the face of Great Britain. Besides, I was piqued by the odd way Black Care had eaten into this fellow's face. It was a face quite remarkably virile in shape. Indeed it was the face that sculptors, in all ages, seem to have agreed to give to Roman private

soldiers. And it was burnt a very deep rich, even brown. He only needed a helmet, of the right make, to resemble a classic warrior done in bronze-except that his countenance had acquired one of the completest sets of taut, minute and circumstantial wrinkles that I had ever seen, bar photographs of aged Cardinals and portraits by Rembrandt.

TT.

From the grand weather our talk shifted round to the vagabond's past. It was I made it shift. He showed no itch to be gabbing or bucking, like most of us middleaged men, about the uncommonness of his youth-and that though most of his fortyeight years had clearly been active: these lives that are given to action in their Spring are apt to be given, in their Autumn, still more plenteously to words. I had to draw from him forcibly, as with a corkscrew, that he was born in the County Kildare, where all the talk is of horses: that his mother had died at his birth; and that his father had taken him out, at the age of some two years, to New South Wales.

There, at the ripe age of ten, my new friend's first adventure had matured. As he recalled it, a little animation came into his voice. He was to ride a rogue horse which his father's employer had entered for an up-country handicap on the flat. This malignant was given the minimum weight-5 st. 6 lb.—in justice to an inveterate hobby it had of stopping, half-way through a race, in order to savage its jockey at leisure in that quiet part of the course. My man's eye began to take light now, as he recalled the state of expectation in which he had thrown his infant leg across this carnivorous animal. His voice quickened.

"'What you got to do, Gnat O'Brine,' says the master to me, 'is jus' get 'im off,

if you can, an' then sit on 'im, sly-like an' secret. Let 'im think you ain't there. 'Ide from 'im, that's a good boy, so's 'e won't bite your knees off.'

"I kep' myself out of his thoughts so successf'ly that we were left at the post for a consid'rable time. Then that tiger perceived that the others were gone, an' off he

long while, savin' one pair of heels that gev a fling up at us out of the fog of the dust an' flicked me kind Angel of Death on the nose. That med him madder than ever to butcher the whole of the field. Now, if only he had a bad motive to show ut, that horse was a flyer. He flew an' he flew, seekin' prey, till, be cripes, the fog thinned to our front, an' out we came into the light of day, with the crowd on the off side of us screamin' 'The cannibal wins,' an' the red winning-post slidin' past on me left, before that divvil



"A big and handsome tramp was lying asleep on the strip of hot grass by the road."

went beltin' after them, wishful to kick them. Ye don't know Australian racin'—no? Well, it's little ye lose. An Australian course is nothin' at all, only dust. By the time we were movin', there wasn't a horse to be seen in the world; only a fat cloud of dust—it hid all. We lep into the back of that cloud, like a boy leppin' over a fire of weeds in a field, and it smoking sulky. From that out I saw nothin' at all for a very

discovered his error an' offered to eat me. Hurt, do ye say? Is ut frikened? Not a tittle. Ye know where ye are with a horse."

While he recalled the old race I could almost see the fumes of a happy intoxicant rise to his brain. Before he began he had been like a man who suspects that the crust of the earth may be only a trap-door, to let him down into a pit underneath. Then, when he warmed to his story, you might

suppose he had quite forgotten the pit. But at the end of the story the cheerful glow seemed to fade from him quickly. He was the man on the trap-door again. time ye'd be frikened," he said with conviction, not to say gloom, "is the time ye'd not know where ye are, an' the time when there's nothin' at all to do in the world, only think of the power of things do be waiting to hurt you." He puffed his pipe with an air of the darkest determination. A man looks like that when he wants tobacco to help him to drive away care, but is not at all sure that the enemy won't down the two of them.

III.

I had to say something or other. I asked, did O'Brine strike it rich, after that, on the plan of letting 'em run their own race ?

"For three years an' a bit," he said, quite dully now, "I was a jockey be trade-first on the flat, an' then over the sticks, me weight growing excissive."

I could believe it. Lean as he is to-day, he must still weigh thirteen stone good.

O'Brine viewed me and my vain curiosity with melancholy eyes, like Age watching sadly the blundering capers of blindfolded Youth. "A gran', stirrin' life, would ye think ut? Ye'd be astounded to feel the seriousness of ut the time ye were that aisy in doin' the work that your mind'd be free to bedivvil itself with worryin' over the turrible things that are loose in the world aye, an' you in the act, it mebbe, of takin' a very enjoyable lep."

To my poor plain mind this seemed a hard saying. I asked, did he mean that his nerve would give way at a jump?

The notion evidently struck him as absurd. "Ach! not at all. Ye'd know where ye were with a hurdle. The divvil and all of ut was that the leppin' itself got to be no distraction at all from the state I was in. I'd have the fear on me, an' me going over a fence an' a brook, as violent as if I were walkin' about in the fields with nothin' to take me mind off me thoughts."

Ah! I began to see now. "The end of ut was," he went on, "that I ran away to sea in desprit hopes of routin' the tim'rousness out of me. For a year an' a half I folla'd the sea; an' mebbe ye'll think me an ijjut, an' mebbe ye'll see what I mean, when I say there was only a week of that time when me mind had seren'ty an' rest, an' that was a foul-weather week we were roundin' the Horn wid a very fair share of the cargo on fire. It's not that I've ever been one o' the fools do be askin' for dangers -God knows it's safety I'm chasin', the whole of me life. An' yet those were the only good days, an' the Divvil knows why."

His large eyes were regaining their lustre. "That fire was deep away down in the hold; no way to reach it at all; an' there it stayed, burnin' an' burnin' away till a good fourth part o' the ship was a match for a kettleonly kep' from being perished and all of red-hotness be havin' water one side of itself though the fire's the other. A grand wind was blowing; it kep' the tub well on the roll, the way her port plates would no sooner be gettin' as red as a horse's shoe in a forge than th' entire port side of her'd dip pretty nigh gunwale-under so's the sea'd be hissin' with steam, an' the ship's dhrunken colour quickly rejuced. It was work, work, work, for the pack of us, bestin' the fire an' bestin' the sea; but all the time ye were at it ye knew where ye were an' your life was singin' itself like a chune. But what's a week in a year an' a half? Nothin' at all."

O'Brine's face had fallen again. As I saw it I pictured the glow dying off the ship's side when the cold water rose to it. Lifelessly he continued: "For anny man who'd be apt to take fright at the world, the sea is no place to be on. Hours and hours there'll be at a time an' you waitin' there for an order to come, an' your mind lyin' out unprotected for anny ol' dread that would rush at it out of nowhere at all. me terror I quitted the sea an' went back to me fawther, the way of the Prodigal Son, to take the beltin' I knew I should get, an' look after the pigs and the poulthry.

"For a year I enjured ut. An' then—ye know the way that it is with a boy. Annywhere else in the worl', excep' just where he is! Everywhere else is the place where the great doin's are an' the dragons are waitin' for him to put ut all over them an' to get hold of the peace that the world cannot give. An' then Ballon's Circus came

round.

"Ach! that was the circus! Lions an' bears an' an el'phant itself, an' Ballon giving ut out he was seeking a steady apprentus to managing lions an' bears. Then I knew in the wink of an eye it was this I'd been wanting, the whole of a year. Sick I had been with the fear of the Divvil knows what at the pit of me stomach. When that is the case the wan thing that'll give you your aise is havin' ut out with a beast or a sea or a fire or anny ol' thing that'll keep a man busy an' happy endeav'rin' not to be killed. An' that's how I couldn't resist havin' thruck with the lions."

I asked how the cure had answered.

"Cure? There's no cure in ut," he said discontentedly. "Lions are not what ye read in the papers at all. Ye'd think, be the way people talk, every lion ye'd meet would be ragin' to eat ye. He is not. It's mere van'ty. Why, what, in the name o' good sinse, is a man to a lion? A middlin' piece of beef done up in a sthringy ould bundle of clothes. Put yourself in his place. Would ye rush at a good chop itself, an' it smothered in flannels an' tweeds would wring the teeth out of your head? No more would a lion with good naked meat to be had, an' he used to captiv'ty an' quit of the foolish ambish'n the wild lions do have to do their own killing always. Lions! Nothin' to them. An' so I schemed an' contrived till they shifted me pitch from tamin' lions to walking a rope of the Blondin or out-door vari'ty-walking an cap'ring an' wheeling a barrow, that has a good groove to its wheel, along a monsthrous cable fortyfeet up in the air, or a hundhred itself, to suit the surroundin's."

"Well?" I inquired with sympathy. Could there be nothing risky enough to quench the thirst of this "timorous" man

for perils to outface?

"Only the ould, ould story," he avowed ruefully. "Danger, is ut? No, but a fraud on the public. Anny time that ye're out in the street the sthrip of pavement ye'd use would not be the width of a rope-walkin' An' what good would ye get from the rest of the street? An', what's more, d'y' ever hear of a man, or a woman itself, bein' killed be walking a rope—aye, or swallowing fire or swords? No, an' nobody has, in th' entire histhory of the world, though there's men droppin' dead on the flat of the road every day, or falling under the cars. An' the reason is plain. A hundhred feet up in the air is a hundhred good reasons for givin' your mind to what ye're about an' not leaving it go tormintin' itself about the precar'sness of human affairs. The soul of you's filled an' at peace, instid of the poor way it's in when there's nothin' at all has got to be done an' your inside is empty an' swep' an' invitin' every terr'fyin' divvil that's loose in the world to come in an' desthroy. So I was in Hivven the time I was learnin' me stunts on the rope, an' li'ble

to slip. But the instant I had the trade learned, so's I couldn't fall off if I tried, all the good of ut came to an end, an' me sense of secur'ty was ruined."

Neither I nor my printer possesses the means of emphasis needed to give you any measure of the bitter earnestness that rasped in the urgently logical voice of O'Brine. He then paused for a while and viewed with a profound uneasiness the pastoral tranquillity of Western Oxfordshire. The man's immense virility of body, his Roman legionary face, his look of lifelong converse with astringent winds and cheerful suns, and then his stricken sense of some infinite, unfixable and unaccountable unfriendliness hemming him in like an atmosphere—all these together formed a tragi-comic contrast that kept me piqued and curious. Somehow I knew that if an armed madman, eager to kill, had come down the road at that moment, O'Brine would have got up and stopped him while I should have tried to look as if I had not observed the phenomenon. And yet I had a quiet mind, as minds go, while fear gnawed O'Brine.

"Very apt I'd ha' been," he resumed, "to go mad if the War hadn't come, to bring

me a little distraction."

IV.

YES, I had just been wondering what the big smash might have brought to a being like this—imperturbable while any actual danger gave him its tiger jaws to look into, and yet so perturbed when that strong pick-me-up was not to be had. I asked him.

He answered sombrely at first. "The War? Be all I've heard, there was great excitement in Europe-men bein' hayroes an' every sort of gran' hullabaloo. But we were out and away at the back of beyond, in German East Africa. All the plain stuff that there was in the War must ha' been dumped in East Africa. Every year we bet the Germans: some diff'rent gen'ral went back every year to the civ'lized world an' said that he'd won. An' then another came out. Schultz said it loudest, so he got the glory. But divvil a German could annyone see, an' no fightin' at all. So I wangled me way to a hospital ordherly's job where promotion was good because most of the lot were weak creatures would not last a fortnight, but if ye did that ye might live the duration."

As he spoke a faint spark was kindling

again in O'Brine's joyless eye. He went on, the spark brightening a little. "Four grand huts there were to our hospital, an' they were spesh'lised intinsely. Each disease went into the hut that became it. All the chol'ra an' dysenthry cases in one. They had Epsom salts. All the shiv'rers were put in another. Theirs was quinine. The ones that were tied up in knots had a hut to themselves because they were going surely to die, for they had sleeping sickness. Cases couldn't be asked how they felt, because they had thirty-five diff'rent languages, every one of them diff'cult, an' me an' the Med'cal Off'cer had good English only. go round in the morning an' count what had died in the night, an' then we'd go after the beasts an' the butterflies in the bushve see, the M.O. was a great man of sci'nce -an' then I'd go round the wards in the evening again.

"There was nobody lived very long in that place. It was right up agin the Equator. A donkey would die in three weeks. There were four hundred beds in me hospital an', on an average, twenty would die in a night. Me first commandant died in five weeks. He was the butterfly man. Me second stuck it out a full six weeks before we buried him. I was the only Eur'pean that didn't peg out in one way or another."

The eyes of O'Brine were growing almost brilliant. He was no longer peering at the sun-filled landscape as if it might bite him. He went on with increasing gusto. fact is, ye had to be careful. Wher'iver the temp'rachure in the sun is a hundhred an' forty, there's this, that an' th' other attimptin' to play little games wi' you. Flies come an' lay their eggs under your There's a bean has a pollen will irr'tate your face till I've seen a man lep into water was crawlin' with crocodiles, just to be guit of the itch of ut. Then there's puff adders will lie on the groun' in the shadows be moonlight an' offer to bite at your leg the way you're due to die in the nex' fifty seconds. But all ye'd need to do is jus' to be careful."

For the first time O'Brine was talking with absolute relish. He went on expanding. "F'rinstance, far too much is made of the pythons they have in those parts. Divvil a python will hurt ye as long as he hasn't a sizeable branch of a tree to belay himself to, with a bend of his tail, the way he can lever the whole of his stren'th out to squash ye. That's how a man always knows where he is with a python. Hol'

down his tail an' ye have him perplexed, for want of the lev'rage. Besides, he's a mod'rate eater, desirin' a meal not above twice or three times in a twelvemonth—about a goat at a time, an' then he'll swallow ut whole an' the horns of the goat do be stickin' out far through the skin of the python, till the digestive proceedin's inside will dhraw the flesh off from all roun' the roots of the horns, an' the horns drop away from th' outside of the python's abdomen, an' so he's all right. With an an'mal like that, one that's not rushing up an' down daily, ragin' for victuals, there's no insecur'ty to speak of."

For the moment O'Brine was rattling away with the wholehearted delight of any good Irishman in a good course of adventure. He even went on, without pressing, to a new chapter of his experiences. "Some o' the natives were lads, an' no questhion. One day I was sitting alone in the hospital yard an' a mob o' them came rushin' in. Ravin' they were, an' foamin', fit to wear No off'cer bein' on duty, they did the whillabalooin' at me that knew sorra a word of the five-and-thirty lingoes they swore in. Howiver, I'd heard, from me infancy out, how dimmocracy was the plan of lettin' everyone talk at the top of his voice before doin' the thing that came into your head. So I dimmocratised them. I had them shoutin' the odds for a space of two hours, an' me givin' the shindy a very fair hearin', as if I were takin' it in, an' then I gev out, be the language of signs, they must dig me a hell of a trench, to bury the dead we had in the place. That set them off roarin' with laughter, the Divvil knows why, an' they went off an' did ut. 'Twas manny days later I heard they'd come up to desthroy ev'ry soul because some black quarthermaster was thievin' their rations. I was surprised. There hadn't been annythin' terr'ble about them at all. Th' absurdity was that they gev me a medal" —I saw that he wore, almost out of sight on his waistcoat, the treasurable ribbon of the D.C.M., which always means stout work—"for 'quellin' at th' outset a dang'rous native risin'.' It was the greatest mistake."

His voice had filled out while he spoke of the riot. It was a wondrous fine voice, indescribably manly, like those of some great tenor singers and some wind instruments. And then, when he spoke again, the voice's round fullness had sagged into something argumentative and almost pettish. "As if annyone didn't know where he was with a nigger! The time ye've a right to be given a medal for livin' at all is the time ye're up agin nothin' on earth, but the fear's in yourself, the way a man would have thirst in himself though porter an' beer an' every partic'lar drink that there is had never been made—only the thirst of him achin' out into space, an' fear is the same."

The kindly fumes that had risen to gladden his brain while his recollections of sunstroke and pestilence, murderous reptiles and murderous men, possessed him, had passed away

utterly now.

V.

From the place where we sat I could see nothing to scare any man. Beyond the low wall on the other side of the road, the ground fell away in a long easy slope. At the foot of the slope, unseen among trees, I knew the infant Thames to be playing quietly in his nursery, nine miles away. Far beyond that, and the sylvan Vale of White Horse, one's eyes came to rest on the dim blue that blurred Lambourn Down. Rest, rest everything had rest. No air was stirring. Half-way down the sky the sun himself seemed to have turned as lazy as everything else: he paused for a while on his way. Warm, pensive, and indolent, all the visible landscape lay outstretched and basking. Quite unsuspiciously it accepted the golden "Well, it feels pretty day's benediction. safe here," I said, very sincerely.

He turned his head quickly. I found his eyes curiously searching. "Are ye sure?" he said shrewdly. "Wouldn't ye think it would be jus' the time that the will of God would be sloshin' down at the two of us out of the sky, an' it the blue that

it is?"

In the sabbatical peace of the hour I heard the familiar voice of one of my own hens, far, far away, rejoicing sleepily that unto her an egg was born. "Why bother about the off chance of a knock?" I said. "What can we do?"

"An' isn't that jus' the bother?" he argued tormentedly. "If there was even the teeniest whiff of a smell of anny partic'lar danger, ye'd know where ye were, an' what to mind out for. The dreadfullest danger there is, an' the one ye can never be quit of, is not knowin' what to mind out for."

I brooded on that. In the course of my brooding there came to my mind a beautiful

road lined with trees, that runs into the town of Arras. During part of the War it was looked down upon by many invisible enemies' eyes. So it lay out in the sun for at least a whole summer, shunned like something accursed, all its excellent surface touched by no feet except those of the terror that walketh by noon-day. Well, this goodly frame, the earth, I mused, must have become like that road for this luckless O'Brine. No: much worse. For at Arras the peril that could not be seen had at least an easily imaginable form: O'Brine would probably have exulted in bluffing the hidden Fritz snipers. Only here, in the deep peace of an idyllic countryside, could the malign infestation of space reach its dread maximum of ungraspable vagueness. Wherever his uncommon sensibility to fear found any solid object of apprehension to deal with. he was already well on the way to relief; the need for instant action set him free and made him tranquil. A lion, a python, a foundering ship or a race in the dark on a man-eating horse—any of these would let loose the passion and power to fight the thing through. The trouble only returned when every palpable object of terror was Then the man's power of fearing would "race" like the screw of a ship when it has no water against which to put forth its strength.

O'Brine was positively haggard by this time. I never saw a man further away from the blest state of those devotees who can say with the uttermost force of belief "The Lord is my keeper" and go about honestly feeling that they are looked after in their goings-out and in their comings-in. O'Brine had become like a man who at any moment might cry out "Help! Help!" The fear staring out of his eyes was so real that—well, it almost seemed to compromise all the pleasant things round us, since this was the best they could do for a great healthy Hercules of a man who had given his proofs by land and sea, fire and air. Even I, stolid lump as I am, felt that the fair scene was becoming a little unnerved under the intense suspicion of his gaze; his fear breathed so hard as to tarnish the mirroring candour of day. I had to shiver a little, for all the mothering warmth of that afternoon sun.

The tormented O'Brine must have come to the end of his power of taking rest. He gave a half-roll over from his seat, to lever up his stiff body. "I must be leggin' it on," he said, "into Lechlade."

I offered the farewell gifts of a friend.

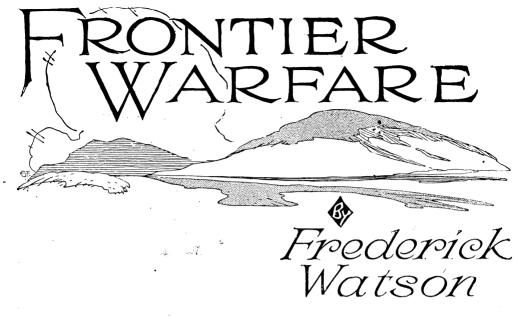




"I watched him slouching down the white road rather hurriedly, with his great shoulders much bent."

These he received with the courtesy of his nation. But what could I give? Only a short-lived command of the bread, the beer and the baccy that perish—not liberation, even for a moment from the curiously compounded self which is one's fate. However, he gave handsome thanks: "May the blessing of God stay with ye always an' keep the fear from ye."

I watched him slouching down the white road rather hurriedly, with his great shoulders much bent. He looked far more than forty-eight, from behind. Black Care must weigh a lot, I thought. And no hope of relief for the poor devil, either, unless a bull with a temper should break loose on the road or fire or small-pox visit some casual ward where he lay.



I.

▼HERE was complete calm in Major Ryley's room because, the day being somnolent and the London papers being late, the Major had fallen asleep. He reclined on his pillows, his fierce eyebrows alert as white sentinels over his shadowed eyes. Even in slumber the Major maintained an air vigilant and challenging, and if his lips did part in a military snore they were masked by the drooping moustache of the 'nineties. The room was so peaceful that Wyncote Manor eased its accustomed tension and seemed for a space of time to doze. Only to Busk, who had seen service in India with the Major and was now the butler, the state of things was too critical to allow one to be deluded by a holy calm upstairs. He had studied the Major for many years, and he knew. Besides, at that very moment Miss Rita, the Major's only daughter, was listening with no sense of comfort to the carefully selected admonitions of Sir William Custer, the eminent specialist. Sir William had not come professionally they all realised the Major would have barricaded his room rather than suffer such ignominy—but during an angling visit at a neighbouring house he had arrived at certain conclusions which he was now imparting to the Major's daughter.

"Your father," he said, "has led a very active life and he is suffering from a reaction.

He cannot adjust himself to a normal existence. If he would take up poultry——"

He paused, aware that the unnaturally solemn face of the girl was suddenly convulsed.

"I admit," he said a little coldly, "that it seems a ridiculous way of spending one's time, but as you say he detests motors, has lost interest in hunting, and finds the Vicar too mild a man to argue with him, I am at a loss. At the same time mental activity he must have or the consequences may be serious. Now his temper—"

"Is appalling—quite appalling," she contributed brightly.

"It must have relief."

"It has."

"By direction into other channels. Temper is only misdirected energy inspired by a sense of futility. The symptoms are common in retired soldiers. Had your father any brothers in the Service?"

"Yes, Sir Charley Ryley, the Admiral.".
"Surely then if he came to stay—"

"Poor Uncle Charles? Oh no. He never opens his mouth. You have not met Lady

Ryley, have you?"

The eminent consultant was now at a loss. He thought he had better leave as gracefully as he could. He repeated one or two generalities and they went over the hall together. At the doorway he met the derisive scrutiny of those mock-

ing eyes in a solemn face and prepared to leave.

"Has the old fool gone?" inquired a hoarse voice from somewhere.

"Shut up," ordered the Major's daughter, and explained sweetly, "Daddy's parrot," as though that eased a sense of personal affront.

Then, even as he stood there buttoning his gloves while the landaulette pulled up, a loud thumping filled the house, the prolonged insistent battering of a stick on the oak floor of the Major's room, at which Sir William scurried into his car, Busk appeared from the pantry, the cook awoke on the horsehair in the servants' hall, the housemaid dropped a serial in which gentlemen behaved like gentlemen, and Rita went lightly up the stairs and into the presence of the Major, now considerably incensed.

"Whose car was that?" he demanded.
"Car—car?" echoed Rita with the air
of a simple person thirsting to help. "What
sort of car, Daddy?"

"How do I know what sort of car? Do you think I can tell their beastly names? How can I say what sort of car? And why should I? Personally I regard all this motoring and popping about the place as the curse of the country. Whoever heard of Bolshevism before cars came in? I never did. I wrote a letter to the Morning Post some days ago."

"It's not in, dear. Now, why isn't it in?"

The Major forgot about the latest models of Humbers, Buicks, Rolls, or whatever car you inhabit. He concentrated on his only and tactless child a glance of utter amazement and righteous indignation.

But even as he collected his mind for immediate action his line of vision received

a very definite impact.

It should be explained that, speaking in highly technical and strategic jargon, Wyncote Manor, a low-lying place, was flanked on three sides by the brook Garnish—a fair trouting stream—preserved but seldom fished by the Major. The land on both sides of this quite delightful stream was also his, and it may be added that any ordinary poet would have worked himself up a good deal over the silver strand which, except in flood, lay on the far side of the stream. It should be added that to protect the Manor from autumn spates a bank and sluice gates carried off a secondary stream. Moreover, backing this strand, as though to complete the delicious scene, was a belt of Douglas firs planted by the Major's father, a man of singular taste and autocracy. From his bed the Major could survey this exceptional scene and, had he so cared, devote his mind to lofty thoughts. But at the moment his temper, already highly inflamed by his daughter's surprising remarks, touched high-water mark without any effort whatever. For in that sacred fork of the river. in isolated and insolent audacity, stood a caravan. The fountains of the Major's exceptional resource in natural eloquence were for a moment dammed. He had a standing abhorrence of vagrants as a burden on the ratepayers, a menace to game, and a disgrace to the country. If he had his way he would ship them all off to an island somewhere.

No Red Indian watching the advance of the paleface could have centred upon the covered wagon a deeper glare of hatred. Even as the Sioux must have watched without any kindly interest or Christian sympathy the early pioneer (so shortly to be scalped) frying his juicy steak of buffalo, so the Major in a terrible silence saw, on his own property, a young man dressed in summer garments collecting twigs to light a fire.

"Rita," he said, "look."

"How absolutely topping," commented that discerning child. "I do envy them. Don't you, Dad?"

"No," he said violently, "I don't. Not

when I've finished with them."

"Would you like to see over the caravan, dear?" she asked, remembering Sir William's stipulation that her father should be encouraged to be interested in things.

"Paper and ink!" snarled her father.

Rita moved adroitly about this simple task. She brought him a soiled piece of paper, a pad of blotting-paper which did not blot, and a fountain pen which was notorious for either ejecting ink with such rapidity only a serial writer could have kept up, or taking no interest in news whatever.

Armed with these weapons, the Major started to rush away with a jolly little note of congratulation. A kind of brotherhood slogan. He wanted to say how interested he was to realise that his property was now a public park, and hoped they would come in and order their meals if it rained. He commenced with a blot large enough to drown a beetle, uttered a short Hindustani word of thanksgiving, made a rent in the paper, and flung it all upon the counterpane. There was no-question Sir William would have been most encouraged.

"Go," he shouted, "to these people, and tell them with my compliments to bung off."

Rita had been gazing out of the window. Without replying, she raised her father's field glasses, adjusted them, and stared. The young man was at that moment lighting his pipe. He was exceedingly goodlooking. Yes, she would go on her errand of mercy.

"What are you staring at?" asked the Major.

"He has a rod," she mused aloud. "I

Smiling confidentially at Busk, who came hurrying upstairs with the Major's trousers, Rita went serenely on her mission.

TT.

COLONEL PETERHOUSE, having retired from the Engineers after many years spent in India's sunny climes, had discovered that the Old Country was about the limit. He was a man of active habits and mind, and a stern sense of getting things done. To go a walk with the Airedales round the Mutton



"'Go,' he shouted, 'to these people, and tell them with my compliments to bung off.'"

wonder if they are going to catch trout for their dinner."

It was a thoughtless remark, because the Major had stocked the river at considerable expense, and only wanted a return of energy to bustle forth. As Busk had often said, if only he would make an effort he would be his old self again.

"If they start poaching," gulped the Major, his moustaches billowing with the glow of hostilities, "that's a different matter. Here, I'm getting up."

"But you said you couldn't, dear, didn't you?"

"I'm getting up, I tell you."

Pond was hardly an occupation, and as no one played chess, and of fishing there was none, the Colonel declined. He grew not irascible so much as downcast. He lost his appetite and began that awful habit of dozing in a chair. Brown, his army servant now retired into private life, took the darkest view. His only son Dennis was at his wits' end. He did his utmost to learn chess, and talked fishing as best he could, having studied all the textbooks. But his parent wilted. He lost snap daily. One evening at dinner, when the maid took the port round the wrong way, he only sighed. The situation was, in fact, critical.

And then that happy idea came to Dennis. They would all go away. Without any disclosure whatever, he arranged with his father that on a certain morning they should depart for a holiday. A surprise holiday. In fact, a caravan. Brown could cycle behind. There is no question the first vision of the caravan was a bit of a shock to the Colonel. A considerable party of small boys had assembled to wish them God-speed; it was a drenching day, and when the Colonel climbed up moodily and stared out of the back end it was a pity an intemperate woman

better meaning in their lives came thirsting for information whether the performing monkeys were inside. To such harmless and innocent merriment the Colonel showed a ridiculously churlish demeanour, and shouted to Dennis to "drive on." Unnerved by one of these mandates, he drove into one of those treacherous one-way streets. Once they are entered escape is impossible. Nothing short of a hydraulic crane can settle the traffic problem again. The arrival of a policeman made Punch, the leading horse, jib. Someone had forgotten to say that



called him "Sweet Lavender." There were also technical difficulties. Dennis had always loved horses, but he had been brought up in town and only knew their noble literary side. He did not realise that to travel from the Mutton Pond to the Kent side of London takes days and a certain sort of courage. Apart from the congratulations of drivers of motor-buses and the applause of their guards (thus making a kind of Hail and Farewell), there were those trying intervals when the traffic was blocked, and people with no

Punch always jibbed if he was stopped. Even then with a cheerful laugh the situation might have been saved, but the Colonel, glaring out of the little window with its natty embroidered lace curtain, was confronted by the enchanted recognition of his Club porter and an interested group of his fellow-members on the Club steps.

It became, in fact, a journey which Dennis only referred to under great pressure, and in the hearing of a picked audience. But even in the presence of men who had been

in the Everest Expedition he would have omitted certain incidents. No one likes the deep congratulatory pause which follows some strictly accurate personal experience. But one thing was without question: the Colonel had taken a turn for the better. He had during those frightful days when even a wheel came off had his mind removed from the monotony of life. It was, however, with a sense of acute relief that Dennis saw that corner of the stream. He knew now that his father would be happy. snug corner, a nice river, pleasant weather and a pipe round the evening fire. Even Brown, who had never cared for cycling, seemed more resigned.

Dennis was thinking of peeling some potatoes when he saw a very pretty girl coming briskly over the meadow. Obviously the Vicar's daughter come to offer hot water or eggs or milk. He went to meet her. Nothing looked jollier than that scene. Sunlight, river, caravan, charming young people. No one could have thought that the baleful eye of the Major was riveted on them from the manor-house, and the ferocious glare of the Colonel from the little embroidered window.

"Dad says you've got to push off," she

said, smiling delightfully.

Dennis recoiled. So that was it, was it? Well, there was a limit. If he harnessed up he knew the crew would mutiny.

"But I say," he stammered, "I've just got the horses out, and put a stone behind the caravan, and everything. There's the fire drawing and the Guv'nor will cut up rough."

"Who'll cut up rough?"

"My father. Can't you say we'll push off at daybreak? What's your father's

name? I'll run up and see him."

"Oh, do. Tell him you won't go! Say that England's a free country, and that you read a letter of his in the papers, and you think he's acting like a child of four."

"But that won't help matters."

"It will help Dad. You see, he's at a loose end. He's always been busy and he can't work his temper off. In India——"

"Did you say India?"

"I did. Why?"

"Because my Guv'nor was there. Perhaps they knew each other. Our name's Peterhouse."

Into her eyes leapt the look of one who hears the unbelievable.

"Your father's not Colonel George Peterhouse?"

"Yes Engineers. Why?"

She gave a little dance of triumph which caused her dear father to utter a bewildered oath, and made the Colonel ache with curiosity and suspicion.

"Dad's greatest enemy," she gulped, and passed for a moment or two beyond speech.

To Dennis the position did not seem gratifying. It seemed, in fact, to point to an early evacuation. That was not to be thought of. He was a quiet young man, but he had his own ideas of beauty and she was enchanting.

"Listen here," she said. "Please what's your name? Dennis? Mine's Rita. Now, before we become eternal enemies I want to explain the rules of the game. My dad and yours used to fight year in and year out in India. That kept them alive. They love each other really. Dad thinks there's no engineer like your father. Has yours ever said anything about Dad?"

"He says what he didn't know about

cavalry isn't in the book."

"There you are. Now my dad's in a bad way. How's yours?"

"The limit."

"I'm so glad. Well, you'll find when they reopen hostilities they'll pick up no end. I can't get mine to eat and he's taken to drinking tea."

"Mine is pining. This caravan's given him a turn for the better, but you can't have a wheel off every day. I thought if I shoved it by the bank the river might rise and float us away. After all, he's an engineer."

"That's it. I'm so glad to have met you like this. Just like the League of Nations, except we're making a war of our own."

"I suppose if we're ambassadors as well as combatants we can meet on neutral ground with white flags?"

"Perhaps we could," she said demurely. "How old are you, Mr. Ambassador?"

"Thirty."

"Quite old. I'm just twenty.' There was a thoughtful pause.

"I'll go in and say Colonel Peterhouse says he'll see him hanged before he'll leave his position," she said.

"And I'll go to the Guv'nor and report that Major Ryley warns him that unless he is in retreat within an hour he'll kick him into the river."

For a moment the ambassadors regarded one another with interested and amiable scrutiny, and then, a little self-consciously, departed to their impatient headquarters.

III.

Arriving home, Rita ran brightly up the stairs and with official decorum entered her father's room. He was up and dressed.

"Well," he said, "and who is the young

"They won't go, Dad—they simply refuse. He asked was an alder a sure thing for the upper pool. He's seen your two-pounder."

The Major rang for Busk.

"Boots," he said in a firm voice, "boots and stick."

"He said his father would see you hanged before he left your small holding."

The Major paused. He fixed on the child of his affections a gaze frankly at sea.

"He said? Who said?"

"His name is Colonel Peterhouse," she explained gently. "I heard him roaring inside the caravan. Dennis says he always feeds the lions at five."

"Peterhouse. Not George Peterhouse?"

"A choleric gentleman in the Engineers." "And to think," muttered the Major, "that I was on the point of sending for the police."

"And why not, Dad?"

"You are too young to understand, child, but in the Service one doesn't do things like that."

"Then what will you do?" she asked with an expectation which her dear father had hitherto never disappointed.

"Do?" he echoed, "let loose the bull. Call Busk and Sam and tell Sam I may

require his lad."

He was struggling into his boots, the light of battle once more in his eyes, a new flush on his withered cheeks.

"And I'm hungry," he said; "this sort of thing makes me ravenous. I'd like some underdone steak, fried potatoes, tomato sauce, a Welsh rarebit, and a glass or two of Burgundy. None of us will be off duty for days. I know Peterhouse. If I don't attack he'll dig himself in. Look at the position he's taken up. The knowing old dog. But I'll smash him. I'll make him remember Allahash. That you, Busk?"

"Yes, sir."

"Remember Colonel Peterhouse?"

"Indeed I do, sir."

"He's asking for it in that caravan."

"The deuce he is, sir."

"He'll get it in the neck this time, Busk."

"I hope so, sir. Made us look pretty small last time, sir."

"Thank you, Busk—that's sufficient.

Perhaps if you keep your wits about you, we won't run the risk again."

In the caravan, about the same time, the Colonel was staring dolefully at the advertisements of yesterday's daily paper. He hardly glanced up when his faithful son came

"We've got to pack up," he said. "Would you mind getting the plates together?"

"Pack up—now? Stuff and nonsense,"

retorted the Colonel.

"The owner of the property says unless we're gone jolly sharp he'll kick us out."

The Colonel rose and, stepping down the ladder, eyed Wyncote.

"I'll go and tell him what's what," he

"Do, please," begged Dennis, "while I shove the horses in.

"Nothing of the sort. The law of trespass only applies to damage. What's the bounder's name?"

"Ryley. Major Algernon Ryley."

The Colonel sprang to attention. A curious half-grin crept under his grizzled moustache. He commenced to stroll along the river-bank.

"Look out," shouted Dennis, loosed the bull."

The Colonel halted. At the far end of the field the gate clanged and was secured behind a massive and malignant brute who came on with resolute stride. At the same moment an upper window revealed the bald head of the Major levelling glasses, and keenly observant.

"Better fall back, sir," counselled Dennis.

"Steadily," ordered the Colonel, with a backward glance. "Don't let 'em think we're in retreat. Don't "-he panted a minute later-" let 'em think we're on the run."

They managed to reach the ladder six feet ahead, and the position was at once —speaking by the textbook—precarious.

The bull, reaching the caravan, expressed a profound curiosity to get to the bottom of the affair. It thrust a horn through the bag of potatoes and shot them into the river. It walked about on the plates, made a hole like a billiard-ball in the kettle, slit the outdoor sleeping tent into ribbons, and chased Brown up a tree. Returning with great good-humour, it lifted the cycle on one horn and tossed it into the river.

"He was always a quick starter," growled the Colonel, "but where poor Algie fails, and will fail again, is through his vanity.

He's eaten up with conceit."

"What shall we do, sir?"

"Have something to eat. I haven't been so hungry for years. Hello! What's that fellow up to? Surely that's Busk——"

In some perplexity they watched the Major's man-of-arms at the double on the opposite bank of the river.

"The horses," grunted the Colonel, "that was bound to come. Brown, can you

advance on Busk?"

"No, sir," replied Brown from an upper branch, "not unless Mr. Dennis can decoy that there bull."

"Don't be ridiculous," said Dennis sharply. A few minutes later and Busk, crossing the stream, had caught the two horses, and recrossed again as the bull—suddenly alive to a lost opportunity—went bellowing up the shallows.

"We're fixed now," said Dennis.

"Fixed be hanged," was all the comment the Colonel made, and helped himself to another cold sausage.

Darkness came down. The bull arrived at the conclusion that the call of duty was over and went to sleep. Brown crept painfully to earth. The beleaguered army reassembled for action. But the Colonel remained quietly smoking and examining the Ordnance map. Then he drew up certain plans, and, descending with the utmost caution from the caravan, the beleaguered force disappeared in the darkness.

They had eight hours to daylight.

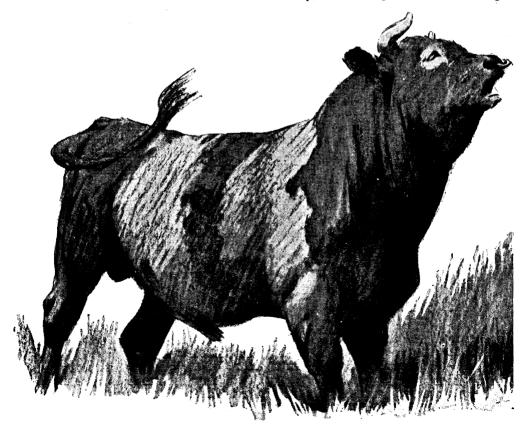
The Major had taken a nap just before dawn and woke to find Busk shaking him to immediate action.

"The river, sir."

Rita came running in.
"The house is in the middle of a lake,"
she said, "and the hens are swimming for

dear life."

Then revelation came to the Major and he uttered a deep and heartfelt oath. How like him to forget the sluice gate and the narrow dam above the meadow. Hurrying to the window, he saw the water eddying in charming open order over the paddock until it crossed the tennis-court, and, encircling the drive, met the shrunk current of the original stream. They were marooned. And all round them came the cries and lamentations of the forsaken; George, the donkey, was beating it for the kitchen gar-



FRONTIER WARFARE. 165 "Things are going nicely," he said; "my old Guv'nor's another man. How's yours?" den; the Wyandottes had taken to the trees; and old Sam, having fallen asleep at his post in the summer-house and being no swimmer, was making frantic yells for a relief party. "But it's a pleasure to see the ducks," said Rita, who felt her father should take a brighter view. He's too clever for us, sir," contributed Busk helpfully. Having now passed beyond the gift of tongues, the Major went out on the terrace and stared over the flooded landtowards the enemy's scape camp. The water had cut off the bull but left the horses high and dry. With the utmost annovance, he saw that wretched young man harnessing them to the caravan, which was then dragged to a place of security about two hundred yards from the house. So near was it that they could distinctly hear the ordering Brown to Colonel attend to the fried eggs and bacon, and watch him smoking comfortably by the fire. An hour later, riding one of the horses and carrying a white flag. Dennis stood about a hundred yards from the Major's headquarters. After a prolonged interval, Rita, astride the Major's old hunter, splashed out, and the conference was opened.

"They managed to reach the ladder six yards ahead, and the position was at once precarious."

"Of course," she said, "this reverse has put him back a little, but he's splendid. Couldn't he have a little success to-day?"

He considered the point, watching her very thoughtfully. He had, as a matter of fact, made comprehensive plans, which in a subordinate is absolutely against all military law.

"You are in a bad way," he remarked complacently; "speaking from the text-book my Guv'nor wrote you are out of action. Will you accept our terms?"

"I'm certain we won't. But what are

they?"

"They are my terms really, but if your Dad accepts them I'll fix the Guv'nor."

" Well ? "

"The Guv'nor says—he doesn't really that the only tactics your Dad knows anything about are chess. He says that he will play out the issue of this present unhappy position and thus save your Dad's face before the country and the history books by challenging him to a game of chess tonight at 8 p.m. Otherwise he will simply leave with the honours of war and the bathroom tap still running. Now it would be a tragedy if hostilities were concluded like that. They must never part again. But how can it be arranged? All that I can think of is that my Guv'nor takes a place here. Then they could fight to a finish over the Parish Council, the Vestry Meeting, the Boy Scouts, the river, community sing-

"There is a house," she said slowly, and,

meeting his gaze, looked down.

"Would you—would you care for us to settle here ?"

"I don't see what it has to do with

"It has a lot to do with you. You see, I would take the house. My business does very well, but-"

"I think I had better go back," she said defensively. "If Dad agrees I'll wave a

flag."

The Colonel was watching Wyncote with the deepest gratification when a flag was seen to wave through an upper window.

"What's that about," he asked.

"It means they surrender," explained Dennis, busied with the dishes, "but the Major—who feels his humiliation a good deal—said he would esteem it a favour if for old times' sake you would play him a game of chess to round off the campaign."

The Colonel shot a suspicious glance at his son. It was very unlike Algie to eat humble pie. But put that way no fellowofficer could refuse.

He signified that he would go.

IV.

In a massive silence the Anglo-Indians faced one another over the chess-board. Colonel was shocked to see the changes the hand of time had chronicled in the Major's indomitable features, and the Major was equally touched by the evidences of age which he had never associated with his old antagonist. What was more-absurd though it may sound—conversation—happily submerged at the game—had shown a tendency to linger over old stations, old contemporaries, and old forgotten scenes. he would to keep things on a proper military basis, the reappearance of the Colonel was a desolating reminder. He recalled a score fond and cherished memories. Colonel, when his opponent was deliberating a move, felt for the first time in many years a return of security. Here, under the candlelight, with the quiet English countryside all about them shutting them in, shepherding them against the old turmoils in which the battle was to the strong, he discovered in the Major—that awkward, cantankerous old figure of fun-a kind of anchorage. And when the Colonel's large grave countenance was brooding over the next move the Major fought against a sentimental obsession that the pigheaded, arrogant old bridge-maker meant more than a source of travellers' tales.

They sat opposite each other under the pensive candlelight. At a certain hour which never varied by a second Busk entered and laid down whisky and soda and sandwiches. He was assisted by Brown, who had already resolved himself into the house-

At ten exactly the Major shoved back his chair.

"Check-mate in three moves," he said.

The Colonel glared at the table. He refilled his pipe and lit it. Then he rose without a word.

The Major, cursing a touch of rheumatics to cover a ridiculous feeling of regret, ordered Busk rather sharply to pour the Colonel out some whisky.

"Never take it now," said the Colonel.

"That's bad," asserted the Major.

"But perhaps to-night—a thimbleful——"

"Busk," said the Major, "two whiskiesdon't stand gibbering there like a monkey."

The Colonel sipped his glass.

"She's all right. Your boy seems the proper stuff. Very few young men to-day

would take their fathers out in a caravan? "Not if the fathers had any sense," remarked the Colonel. "I think," he added,

"it's about time we shifted. Where's Den-

he could do the obvious thing and tell the

"I'll call Rita," said the Major, wishing

"Nice place this," he said reflectively.
"Nowhere like it. Fishing, shooting, wonderful church. Not many people."

There followed a long pause, followed by a

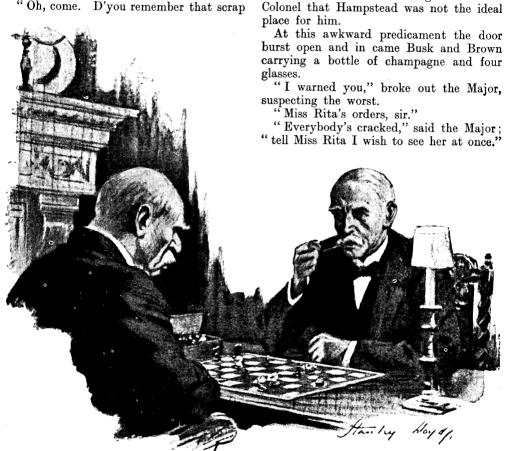
chuckle from the Colonel.

"That was a good move of yours, Ryley. That bull rounded us up nicely."

"My dear boy, your counter-attack was a

stroke of genius.

"Oh, come. D'you remember that scrap



"In a massive silence the Anglo-Indians faced one another over the chess-board."

at Brahmatown when you pulled us out of a mess?"

"Rot, Peterhouse—rot. They made too much of it. You had pretty well finished the job before we came up.

The silence was now companionable. Busk, smiling in the shadows, laid a tray of hot water, lemon, glasses, and spoons on the table, and withdrew to the kitchen, where old Brown was already very congenial

"I like the look of that girl of yours, Ryley."

Busk, with the same air of complacency, released the cork with a resounding pop and poured out the golden stream. It was then that Dennis entered and, confronting the two elderly gentlemen, now showing symptoms of increasing disquietude, remarked, "In raising your glasses I wish you to realise that we are taking part in an event which promises the happiest prospects for us all.

"I'm surprised at you, Dennis," burst out the Colonel, overtaken by the most sor-

did suspicions.

"Please don't interrupt, Guv'nor," begged

Dennis; "after all, you're in clover now."
"What do you mean—in clover——?"

"Allow me to finish. When I was peeling the potatoes—only last evening—I fell in love."

"The boy's been drinking," explained the

Colonel.

"It's Rita. She's the deuce," said the Major. "I'm sorry, old man, but she'd make a fool of an Archbishop."

"What's more, I'm engaged."

"Anything else?" inquired the Colonel,

but more feebly.

"Yes. I've taken the place next door, and that's about all. Rita—"

She came from nowhere, and, going up to her father, pulled down his face to hers. "Don't be a nuisance," she whispered, "it's all right. And we'll marry rather than have such a pair of aggravating old darlings on our hands any longer."

The Colonel took a sidelong glance at the Major, who, unseen by anyone else, replied with a deliberate wink. Raising their glasses, they drained them and suddenly discovered they were once again alone.

"What about another game, George?" said

the Major.

"I'll wipe the floor with you—you old dog," said the Colonel, relighting his pipe.

LIFE IN THE LIVING.

CING me a song that is sung with a swing,

Like a horse at the gallop, a bird on the wing.

Choose me a chorus that sounds with a ring,

Like the tune of the North wind o'er bracken and ling.

Sing me no sobbing and moaning lament

Of a love that is lived, of a life that is spent.

Sing me a song of the here, of the now,

Of the glint of the sun, of the hill's wind-blown brow;

Of poppy-decked fields, the rustle of corn,

Of the bark of the sea-dog, the bound of the fawn.

Why waste thy voice on a theme that is spent?

On a house that has fallen, a garment all rent?

All that she gave is Nature still giving;

Oh, sing me the great song of life in the living.

M.E.





"I turned on the light, to find Roger climbing through the window. 'Sorry to knock you up, sir,' he opened cheerfully. 'There's a bit of a fire; and some lunatic has been locking half the doors.'"

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE •

THE ADVENTURE OF THE INCORRUPTIBLE BACHELOR

By STEPHEN McKENNA

" NOTWITHSTANDING anything to the contrary contained in my Will I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my real and personal estate to such grandson of mine as shall be the first to marry within twelve calendar months from the date of this Codicil and shall within that period legally adopt the surname of Datchley and shall within six months of his marriage give an Undertaking to reside at Datchley Castle for not less than six calendar months in each year after my death. If there shall be no such grandson, then the provisions of my Will shall take effect."

Extract from the codicil to the last will and

testament of John Datchley.

ONDON," expounded Roger Abbotsford, "is manageable for the rich, ■ easy for the poor and utterly impossible for the people in between. Don't you agree, Mr. Plimsoll?"

We were on our way to Carr's Hill for the week-end; and, as this was the first time I had seen Roger since the day when I explained his grandfather's will to him, I was

trying to find out how he proposed to enjoy his new affluence. At our last meeting, Roger had been a bank-clerk with a talent for versifying and a genius for getting himself invited to the houses of the great; he was now a man of small independent means, with no ambitions, no responsibilities and no extravagances of taste or conduct. What, I had asked, would his next move be?

Roger did not seem to think that any move was required of him. The legacy which he had received from old John Datchley was now prudently invested; he had resigned his position in the bank; and, if he had given himself a label, it would have been that of "a gentleman of leisure". For such, he was maintaining, England was a more than tolerable setting, always provided that one had a great deal of money or no money at all.

"Are you speaking as a banker?" I enquired, "or as a student of society?"

I'm speaking from my own experience," Roger answered. "Until the last months I've never had more than enough to pay for my food and clothes, but people have always been extraordinarily decent to me."

Roger's modesty and gratitude are among

his most engaging characteristics.

"I suppose there's always a demand," I said, "for presentable boys and girls who have good manners and are passably dressed and can dance and play games, though I don't quite know where the life of the perpetual guest leads. You, of course, are rather different, Roger: you've always been something of a dark horse."

The ingenuous blue eyes looked at me

enquiringly.

"You don't mean that people have invited me on the chance that I might come in for some of my grandfather's money?" he asked.

"I was thinking rather of your literary reputation," I said.

Roger snorted contemptuously:

"Once in a blue moon I get a poem taken by one of the weeklies, but even I don't regard myself as a poet."

"Then what," I asked, "is the secret of your popularity? Why, for example, does Mrs. Tregaskis ask you to Carr's Hill?"

"Because she knows I try to pull my weight in a party," Roger replied.

"You don't think she looks upon you as a possible husband for one of her daughters?"

"Just the other way round! She knows it's quite safe to invite me because there's no danger of complications. When you see how girls like Ann or Barbara Tregaskis have been brought up, you can't picture them marrying a bank-clerk and settling down in half of a bed-sitting-room in Bloomsbury."

"They don't attract you seriously?"

Perhaps it was the heat of the car, perhaps a commotion of conscience that flushed Roger's fair skin.

I'm attracted by them," he admitted. "I don't try to hide it. But not by one more than another. They must see that."

"You're running a pretty big risk," I warned him.

"We'll hope there's safety in numbers," Roger laughed. "If you take all the houses I stay in, there are a tidy few of these girls. I don't know whether they all think I cherish a hopeless passion for them. If it's a risk, it's been hanging over us for a good many years . . ."

"But your circumstances have changed

considerably in the last few months."

By this time it must have been common knowledge in Roger's set that by the codicil to old Datchley's will a fortune of more than four millions was being left to that one of his grandsons who married first.

"They wouldn't expect that to make any difference. You see, they all look on me as a bachelor by choice as well as by fate. Temperamentally. Habitually. Dyed-inthe-wool. Incorruptible . . ."

"So they don't expect you to make love to them; and they aren't piqued when you

don't. I see," I said.

II.

Mrs. Tregaskis had warned me to expect a "juvenile" party; and in addition to her three girls I found a house tilled with the young men and maidens whom she had collected to help beguile the tedium of her son's first long vacation. I heard rumours of a dance and a lawn tennis tournament. There was, my hostess confided grimly, to be a water-gymkana if the party continued into the following week; but a hint of private theatricals encouraged her to hope that it might break up prematurely.

Selfishly, I wished that the gymkana could have taken place, as an eliminating trial, the day before I arrived. In the hands of the Tregaskis girls a juvenile party could generally be trusted to produce one or two broken limbs; and I felt that, if they had drowned a few of their guests quite recently, the others might be sobered for the length of my visit.

didn't mind bringing down?" Mrs. Tregaskis enquired, as we

drifted into the garden after tea.

The experience had in fact been wholly enjoyable, but I was amused to observe that, while the other guests were left to come down by train, Roger had—as usual—been found a place in some one else's car. His knack of falling on his feet is so nearly second nature to him that I doubt if he is conscious of it.

"We had a very interesting discussion," I answered, "about the good fortune of the

undeserving."

"Oh, did he say anything about his plans?" asked Mrs. Tregaskis. "I was so glad to hear about his legacy. I only hope it won't unsettle him."

"He's behaving very sensibly at present," I told her. "At first I was afraid he might plunge into a rash marriage on the chance of inheriting his grandfather's fortune, but he tells me he isn't a marrying man."

Mrs. Tregaskis smiled at the idea of Roger's calling himself a "man" of any

kind:

"It seems only the other day that he was coming to nursery tea with my babies. I always look on him as one of the family. Still, I suppose they are all of them growing up," she sighed.

At least, then, in the minds of these girls' mothers my young friend had sowed no

deceptive hopes.

We strolled towards the courts to watch the beginning of the tournament. Roger was drawn to play with Barbara Tregaskis, but he was reported to have disappeared with Eleanor and, when we tracked him to the raspberry-canes, he was standing with Ann. As we returned to the house an hour or so later, he was giving an arm to another girl, who had twisted her ankle in trying to achieve a Lenglen leap. He retired with yet another to make cocktails, assisted a fifth to choose records for the gramophone, sat between two more at dinner and danced impartially with all in turn, after a preliminary round with their mothers.

This, said I, is pulling one's weight at a party. It was also, I felt, achieving that boasted safety which Roger declared to lie in numbers, but I could not be sure that the safety extended to his rapidly changing partners. Hard though it be at all times, however, to understand the way of a man with a maid, it is starkly impossible when their combined ages are less than that of the man who is seeking to understand them. I was watching Roger, as must be evident, rather carefully; and I had no difficulty now in understanding his popularity. He was good-looking, he was happy and he wanted

every one to share his happiness. I should be sorry to say how many of the older women murmured to me of "dear Roger" and of his "wonderful power to make a party go". When Mrs. Tregaskis began to send the young people to bed, I found that Roger was regarded as a member of about half-a-dozen different families: the mothers, who had "known him since he was a small boy", kissed him good-night; and in his turn Roger kissed the daughters whom he had "known since they were in the nursery".

"It doesn't mean anything," said Barbara, when I commented on his privileges.

"I sometimes wonder what does mean anything with your generation," I answered. "When I was Roger's age, it would have meant something to be called by my Christian name, something more to be addressed as 'darling', something still more . . ."

"It's only a form of words, surely. Good gracious, if I had to account for every time

I'd 'adored' somebody . . ."

"But how do you make yourself understood when it's more than 'a form of words'? All your small change of endearments and caresses seems to have been used up in conversation."

"You should ask Roger," laughed Barbara. "He's had most experience, I should

think."

I looked round the hall, where the women were drinking lemonade at one end while Fritz Tregaskis served whiskey at the other. Roger was missing; and I was informed that he was helping his disabled partner to her room.

"I believe he's getting rather a crush on Sybil," said Ann Tregaskis with more interest than seemed to be warranted by the boy's manner of machine-made devotion.

"Dear Roger!" sighed Barbara. "He always does what's expected of him. I was afraid he might have grown discreet when he became a parti, but he still talks to you as though you were the only woman in the world."

One of the other girls joined us in time to hear the last sentence.

"Writes, too, if it comes to that," she added. "I was turning over some of his old letters the other day. . . . You know, I could frighten poor old Roger out of his life by threatening to give him away."

"It would be most salutary for him if you could," answered Barbara, "but he's very difficult to corner. When he first came in for this money, I wanted mother to ask him what his intentions were. He'd flirted with

all three of us quite impartially, you see. She wouldn't help, though; and, if we're to do anything, we must do it ourselves. It would be fun to make him commit himself. I don't know if any one has any ideas?"

As she looked round her sisters and friends, I began to listen with mingled interest and trepidation. In her time I have watched Barbara playing many parts. On one occasion she arrived with ringlets and an ear-trumpet to see over Carr's Hill and outraged her unsuspecting father by calling his Romneys "quite excellent copies"; another she impersonated a drunken cook and defied her mother to turn her away without a month's wages. Little as he deserved compassion, I began to feel sorry for Roger. Though Barbara's freedom from malice assured me that Roger had not been raising false expectations, he was unlikely to escape on this account. What evidently ruffled the surface of these girls' serenity was the quality which I have called Roger's knack of falling on his feet; and they were good-humouredly piqued by his impregnable discretion.

"If he has flirted with you impartially," I said, "he may explain that he loves you

equally."

"He must shew a preference, even if he doesn't feel it," Ann decided. "If we arranged a big drowning-act in the gymkana..."

"From what I know of Roger," commented Barbara, "we should spoil our clothes and he would stand on the bank with a boat-hook."

"We might have an alarm of fire," Ann suggested.

The proposal was received in silence which I felt to be disturbingly favourable.

"You don't think Roger will content himself with telephoning for the firebrigade," I said, "and then go back to bed?"

"Roger won't go back to bed," Ann predicted grimly. "This is going to be the busiest evening of his life. And the first thing is to lock the telephone-room. . . . Good-night, Mr. Plimsoll! I do hope you won't be disturbed. You're over the library, aren't you? We'll be as quiet as we can."

Without arguing or taking a vote, they seemed to have made up their minds; and I was obviously delaying the plan of campaign. When the Tregaskis sisters took up war-stations like this, I knew—better than most—the futility of trying to restrain them.

"Don't really set the house on fire," I advised, rather hopelessly.

III.

I WENT to my room soon after eleven and was asleep before midnight. An unexpected noise waked me some time later; and, as I sat up in bed, I heard the clock in the stable-yard striking three.

At the same moment my name was called; and I turned on the light, to find Roger

climbing through the window.

"Sorry to knock you up, sir," he opened cheerfully. "There's a bit of a fire; and some lunatic has been locking half the doors. You'll have to come down by this ladder, the hall's impassable. I should put on some thick clothes. It's not serious, but you don't want to be caught here, if it spreads."

Definitely, I had not bargained for this. How Ann Tregaskis and the others secured their revenge was a matter between them and Roger. Though I had not thought it necessary to declare my terms, I felt that the price of my silence was that I should be left in peace; and peace was the reward most ardently desired in a house like Carr's Hill, where everybody plotted eternally against everybody else. I should not have been in the least surprised to learn that the girls who had sought my advice were now gone over to the enemy, that the objective of the war had shifted and that they had all agreed to get "old Plimsoll" out of bed on a false alarm of fire.

"Where has it broken out?" I enquired

cautiously.

"In a cubby-hole by the staircase to the east wing. I think they call it the brushing-room. The trouble is that the smoke's so thick you can't get upstairs. Fortunately there's another staircase, in the tower at the far end; but the door seems to be locked on the inside."

"So the people in that wing are imprisoned?"

There was no need for me to affect anxiety. I have at all times the elderly, timid man's dread of fire; and at this moment I was feeling that, if a tragedy resulted from this insane practical joke, I should be in part responsible. While there was a chance that the objective of the conspiracy had shifted, I did not choose to shew Roger that I was frightened; but an acrid smell of smoke, penetrating to my room from the other side of the house, warned me that the fire might be more serious than these hare-brained girls had intended.

"Nobody's in any danger," Roger assured me, as he roamed—in pyjamas and a burberry—round my room in search of cigarettes. "Those girls are able-bodied young wenches. They can jump out of their windows if they don't find the key of the door. As a matter of fact, Mr. Tregaskis is Romeoing them in turn from the top of a ladder. I paraded him for rescue duty while I gave the alarm to Mrs. Tregaskis and the people in her wing."

We were none of us, then, to be spared. If the girls revenged themselves on Roger by giving him a broken night, Roger was revenging himself on fate by seeing that we shared his misfortunes with him. I could only hope that Fritz Tregaskis would visit his own discomforts on the heads of his daughters.

"How did you hear about it?" I asked.

"Eleanor Tregaskis knocked me up," he explained. "There was a smell of smoke; and she'd tried to get through to the butler's room. When she reached the hall, she couldn't get back. I warned the older women and mobilized the men. After that, I thought I'd let you know what was happening. There's not the slightest danger, I should say; but you'll stifle yourself if you try to get through the hall. What d'you think about it?"

My answer was to get out of bed and put on thick tweeds and an overcoat. I too would not believe that the fire was serious, but the smoke was gripping my throat.

"Sportsman!" Roger exclaimed as he

watched my preparations.

"Has every one been told?" I asked.
"We don't want to see some hysterical scullery-maid throwing herself out of an

upper window."

"I convoyed them out to the stables and called the roll," said Roger. "Mrs. Elphinstone, the housekeeper, has taken charge. If you feel equal to it, you might lend a hand with the pictures in the dining-room. There's that lovely Mrs. Belper by Romney. . . . Heaven knows when the fire-brigade will arrive."

"You've telephoned for them?" I asked.

"I did that first of all. Some idiot had locked the telephone-room, but I managed to break the door down. All ready? I'll go first to steady the ladder."

As he threw a leg over the sill of the window and disappeared from sight, I saw for the first time the thick cloud of black smoke that had curled and slid, against the grey stone of the house, from the young people's wing to my own. Small wonder that Eleanor had been unable to pass a second time through

those stifling, bitter fumes! As my eyes became accustomed to the deep blue that heralded the dawn, I saw clustered figures in strange garments and observed a methodical procession of silent men bearing piles of silver and linen out to the lawns.

Suddenly, from the far side of the house, came the wail of a shrill, excited voice.

"As quickly as you can, sir," Roger called out from the darkness at the foot of the ladder. "It sounds as if somebody was

beginning to panic."

I descended with what speed I could muster and, leaving the pictures to their fate, hurried round to the terrace that ran along the east side of the house. For an unpractical poet Roger had done his work with creditable speed and order. Every one was now out of the house, every one was answerable to some one else, who in turn was answerable to Roger. The girls were being shepherded to an empty garage, where hot soup was already awaiting them; the older women were seated under rugs in the orangery; the men, in squads of three, were methodically emptying the house of its valuables. One girl only seemed to have escaped the clutch of Roger's disciplinary fingers; and I guessed that it was her cry which I had heard when she began to whimper hysterically about a missing dog.

"Binkie? He won't come to any harm," Roger assured her. "This is only something in the brushing-room smouldering and making such a smoke that you can't get near it. If you'll wait till the fire-engine arrives . . ."

"And leave Binkie to be burned alive?"

shrilled the girl.

"He won't...," Roger was beginning testily.

At this moment, unfortunately, a small and pampered dog's small and querulous bark made itself heard. I looked up to see a woolly, yellow monstrosity with hair over its eyes and a silver bell round its neck, fidgeting on the window-sill of one of the girls' rooms. In response to his owner's cry of "Dar-ling! Come to mother," he projected his head once or twice over the edge of the sill, drew it back, gathered himself for a spring, thought better of it and resumed his melancholy yapping.

"I must save him! Binkie dar-ling!" cried the girl, with the exaggerated and uneven emphasis which young women in all generations seem to find necessary in speaking to, or of, cats, dogs and babies.

"Wait while I get a ladder," growled

Roger.

Before he could move, however, the girl was climbing the wall which she had so lately descended, kicking off her slippers and winning a purchase for her bare feet in the forks and tangles of an age-old creeper. The ascent was short; and, if she had fallen, there was an ample rose-bed to receive her, but she had reckoned without the uncertainties of the creeper. I heard the

crack of a dry branch; the climbing figure slipped sideways; and, after an uncontrollable squeak of fear and pain, a gasping voice an-

nounced:

"I'm stuck! My foot's caught! I can't get up or down."

I turned to look for Roger, but he had already vanished. I cannot say whether the cry had been heard in the garage and orangery, but, before I could make up my mind what to do, three processions were converging on the east terrace, forgetful of Roger's carefully instilled discipline and of his repeated request that, as there was not the slightest danger, no one should "panic". At the same moment I caught the sound of a clanking bell, as an engine raced up the drive; and, as the booted and helmeted members of the local fire-brigade advanced at the double, the sun—as though in general obedience to Roger's newly discovered talent for organization and dramatic effect-rose in an orange glow and projected its first beams on a scene of gallantry that must have won the approval even of the most experienced or jaded producer of films.

The cheering was led by Major Parfitt, head of the fire-brigade, as Roger, black of face and coughing painfully, appeared with streaming eyes at the window where the aggrieved Pekinese still trotted and barked. It was taken up by all of us as he leant down and pulled the girl free. There was a brief lull as a ladder was run up. Then the cheering, now not unmixed with occasional sobs, broke out again as Roger climbed cautiously to earth with the rescued girl over one



IV.

I RETURNED to bed with an incipient chill and remained there until dinner.

It must not be thought that I was neglected in this time. Instead of the man who had looked after me the night before, Barbara Tregaskis appeared with my early tea. In spite of a broken night, she looked prettier than I had ever seen her before; and, whether it was a kind heart or an unkind conscience that sent her to me, she achieved my subjugation when she changed my hotwater bottle and filled my vases with flowers which she had herself picked that morning.

"You see, you're going to stay here and keep warm," she explained, "till we know whether we've given you your death of cold."

"Don't trouble about me," I begged. "



"A gasping voice announced: 'I'm stuck! My foot's caught! I can't get up or down.'"

should think some of the others are in a far worse state."

"Jean à Court has done her ankle in, but that's the only casualty so far."

"So far ? "

Barbara shut the door and seated herself on the foot of my bed.

"There'll be casualties, good and plenty,"

she prophesied uneasily, "if father hears how last night's racket started. Are you going

to be a sport?"

If I had fancied for a moment that Barbara and her mad young friends would profit by a sharp lesson, I almost think I should have turned informer. To tell Tregaskis, however, would have ruined the party, made Barbara my enemy and done nothing at all to restrain her from similar escapades in the future.

"You deserve to be severely punished,"

1 said

"It didn't work out quite as we'd intended," she answered lightly, "but there's not much damage done. It was a bore about the fire-brigade, but we're getting up such a subscription that, if we ever have a real fire, they'll be out here in five minutes. Anyway, it was good practice . . ."

"And it was good exercise for your elderly guests to carry several hundred-weight of silver and pictures about in the middle of the night," I interrupted with a

poor effort at sarcasm.

"I hadn't looked at it that way, but there's something in it. Mother's delighted. She says the maids can't have dusted behind the pictures for about two years. She's having them out on the mat this morning..."

"Not that glorious Romney!" I gasped.
"No, the inglorious Angela who ought to have dusted behind the glorious Romney.
... Well, we can count on you not to split?"

"I must preserve complete liberty of

action," I insisted.

Barbara was not satisfied.

"You're going to spoil a charming romance, if you say anything," she warned me. "At least, I suppose there will be a charming romance. Girls are always expected to marry the men who rescue them from a horrible death."

"If Roger has to marry all the people he rescued last night, he'll have his work cut

out for him."

Barbara grimaced a little contemptuously

at this talk of rescuing.

"Beyond throwing stones at our windows and telling us to jump, he didn't do much. Except for Jean. It's her I was thinking of. We've told her she'll have to marry Roger now."

"And what does she say to that?"

"She says he hasn't asked her yet."

"That," I replied, "with all possible deference to Miss à Court, but with some knowledge of Roger, does not surprise me."

My next visitor, who arrived with breakfast and the morning papers, was Fritz Tregaskis.

"Well, I don't suppose we shall persuade you to come here again," he began gloomily. "Nice house for a tired solicitor! Nice people! You know how the thing started? Barbara burning old letters in the brushing-room fire-place and not troubling to see that the register was jammed. These girls!"

"So long as there was no harm done . . ."

"Thanks to young Abbotsford, I've escaped with one blackened ceiling and a broken lock in the telephone-room. That boy has a better head than I gave him credit for, Plimsoll! When you say a feller's a poet, I always picture him as one of the long-haired, baggy-trousered brigade, but Abbotsford's not that by a long chalk. I was wondering what I ought to do about it. Do you think a watch or a cigar-case . . .? Trouble is, these young fellows all smoke cigarettes and wear ridiculous bangles! I must shew my appreciation somehow, though . . ."

My next visitor was Roger himself, who sought refuge in my bedroom from the very appreciation with which his host was

threatening him.

"Well! And how are we to-day?" he opened with slightly feverish jocularity. "A slight catarrh? Pains in the back? Say ninety-nine . . . My word, I've had a morning and a half, sir! Talk about a bedside manner . . ."

"Are you nursing the party back to health after saving it from a horrible death?" I enquired in Barbara's phrase.

Roger nodded dismally:

"Pretty well! Mrs. à Court came in while I was dressing and cried all over my clean shirt. My hostess kissed me. The butler invited me into the steward's room and made me a speech on behalf of the upper servants. I don't know what's coming next! My nerve's going. When one of the maids spoke to me, I loosed off a yell that sent her into hysterics. Poor girl, she only wanted to know whether she might come in to do my room, but I made sure she was introducing a deputation."

Not for the first time, I felt that Barbara's fire, as a means of committing or punishing Roger, had been but indifferently successful.

"And now," I told him, "Fritz Tregaskis is wondering whether you'd like a cigar-case or a watch."

"Are they all completely mad?" Roger groaned. "As I told you, the thing didn't

deserve to be called a fire. Two or three chunks of burning paper . . . I was only afraid people might lose their heads. Why, unless you're bed-ridden, you could always jump for it, if the worst came to the worst. All I did was to chuck stones at these people's windows and tell 'em to put on thick clothes."

"It was rather more than that when you went to the rescue of Miss à Court." I re-

minded him.

Roger wriggled his shoulder-blades im-

patiently:

"The smoke was about one degree worse than a good London fog. And I was much more inclined to smack her silly head than to haul her in. Little idiot! Her wretched dog wasn't in any danger; and, if he had been, we could have fetched him down in two minutes with a ladder. Instead of that, she must go stunting up the face of the house ..."

"Has she sent for you?" I asked. Roger shook his head unamiably.

"I told her what I thought of her at the time. I don't suppose she'll ever speak to

me again."

"I should be sorry to think that. And so will all the people who saw in that gallant rescue the beginning of a very charming romance."

"Romance?" echoed Roger. "Not for me! I told you yesterday I was one of nature's bachelors. . . . That wasn't what I came to talk about, though. I was wondering whether you couldn't do something to get these people off the high heroic note. It's frightfully embarrassing for me. If you really mean that Tregaskis is plotting to make a presentation . . . "

"I should think he would say a few words

after dinner to-night," I hazarded.

Roger's face stiffened with sudden resolution.

"I shan't be here, then."

"You can't refuse the reward of valour!"

"Can't I?"

year brown

"Then accept it as a revenge for a broken night," I suggested.

WHEN I got up in time for dinner, I was told that our late rescuer had retired to bed with a headache.

Can't say I'm surprised," muttered Fritz Tregaskis, "after last night's circus, but I wish he could have put in an appearance. I'd asked one or two people to meet him."

"I expect he'd heard of that. Heroes are notoriously modest," I said.

"Still . . . I wanted it to be a bit of an occasion. Major Parfitt is coming. By the way, you know they want you to make a speech?"

"Who does? No one who's ever heard

me!" I cried.

"Your fellow-guests. When they heard I was giving him a gold watch, Timmy à Court said they must do something too. No affair of mine, but I understand they sent round the hat and collected quite a bit. You weren't approached? Barbara had it in hand."

"No doubt she felt I should be giving my services if I consented to speak.'

"And you will?"

"I will," I said. "Oh, I will! I will!" Few men are worse after-dinner speakers than I am; none, as a rule, enjoys speaking On this occasion, however, I felt quite

You're not going to give us away?" enquired Barbara doubtfully, as the end of

dinner drew near.

"When every eye is moist with

emotion?" I cried.

"I fancy it's the champagne. At the same time, it was a marvellous escape for every one. I had no idea the register was jammed. We might quite well have burned the house down.'

"I hope you will remember that the next time you are instituting a new judgment of Paris. It was a most merciful escape, not

least for Roger."

"Mightn't that have been expressed differently?" asked Barbara. "And he's not out of the wood yet. Jean à Court takes some explaining away. He could have left her to the fire-brigade . . ."

"And thrown away his climax? Roger escaped very neatly and perfectly. You were all conspiring to make him ridiculous; and he turned the tables on you. Without

premeditation, without malice . . ."

I stopped as Fritz Tregaskis stood up to propose the health of his absent guest. The speech was one that Roger would have hated to hear, but I listened attentively in the hope of being able to reproduce it if I ever plucked up courage to tell him the whole story. While Fritz mouthed his solemn platitudes about cool heads and stout hearts, I reflected that Roger was living up to his reputation for always falling on his feet. The darling of a country house had become a countryhouse hero. He was being loaded with gifts and pelted with honour. And the cost of the gold cigarette-case which I was to present

to him on behalf of the guests had been borne in large measure by a dozen girls who had already that day dipped into their purses for a subscription to the local firebrigade. My young poet had achieved poetic justice.

Our host was followed by Major Parfitt; and heroics gave way to statistics. When we had been furnished with particulars of neighbouring fires, their causes and consequences, for twenty minutes, the attention of the audience began to flag; and I was accorded a more favourable reception than I deserved when I got up to make the last speech of the evening. Of escapes, whether they were providential or mechanical, we had by now heard more than enough; and I won the sympathy of the table by saying that Roger was twice blessed in that he had escaped having to make or listen to a speech.

"But," I continued with a glance at Barbara, "he is probably thinking at this moment that he has escaped a greater embarrassment even than these. I may say, as he is not here to listen, that Roger Abbotsford is a young man of quite unusual charm. If I were a girl, I should certainly be in love with him; as I am only a man, I can but wonder why he has not yet married. The answer, I suppose,—certainly the only answer that I could frame if I had the good fortune to stand in his shoes—must be that he has never been able to make up his mind. When a young man in one of Wilde's plays protested that he did not know how to talk, his elderly adviser replied: 'Talk to every woman as if you loved her, and to every man as if he bored you.' That, I imagine, is the secret of Roger's success."

I heard a laugh in one or two parts of the

"It is hard to believe, however, that even a man who talks in this way, even a man who calls himself an incorruptible bachelor, should have no preference. If he were navigating a flimsy canoe over boiling rapids, it is hard to think that, when two pairs of hands were outstretched, when two voices cried simultaneously, 'Save me!' he would be wholly indifferent whom he saved. In a house where he has talked to a dozen women as though he were in love with them, one would fancy that an event like last night's fire would compel him to declare himself. If it had been arranged of set purpose to make him declare himself, one would stake a fortune that, whatever perished or was

rescued in the fire, his reputation as an incorruptible bachelor would have disappeared for ever. One thinks of midnight silence broken by a shrill alarm. One hears banging doors, hurrying feet, crying and choking. A house, invisible but a moment before, is suddenly lit up by a sinister glare. Banks and waves of smoke eddy and swirl. Then, of a sudden, a window is flung open. There is a cry for help. A ladder is pushed into the flames. Our hero mounts . . . and disappears. He reappears . . . with our heroine in his arms."

As I paused, I heard a murmur of conversation from Miss à Court's end of the table :

"It's rot for Roger to say I was stunting. He was stunting himself. Any one but a fool would have brought a ladder. He pretty well pulled my arms out of their sockets . . ."

I continued:

"Ladies and gentlemen, what in fact happened last night? To which room did our hero hurry? Through which window did he climb? Where was his favour shewn? How did he declare himself? From his own account he left the young to save themselves, after scattering a handful of gravel on their windows and telling them to jump clear of the rose-bushes. They were, in his own phrase, able-bodied wenches. Was it to the old and infirm that he turned? I fear that he was content to rouse their maids and to advise warm wraps while he gave orders for soup to be prepared. the person whom he rescued, whose room he entered, to whose window he applied his ladder, was neither maid nor matron but my unworthy self. To me he turned first, to me alone he turned. And it is for this reason, I imagine, that I, so marked by his devotion and singled out for his favour, have been accorded the honour of seconding this toast and of presenting him with the token of gratitude and esteem for which my fellow-guests, without jealousy or resentment, have combined to subscribe.'

Then I sat down. Mrs. Tregaskis shook a disapproving finger at me and said that, though I made light of Roger's heroism, he was none the less a real hero. Barbara said that she could not grudge him his triumph, but that I had rubbed it in rather unmercifully.

"I owed myself something for a disturbed night and a cold in the head," I reminded her.

MIRZA ROUSTAM, • DETECTIVE •

By J. DOUGLAS KERRUISH.

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■ ILLUSTRATED BY L. G. ILLINGWORTH

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IRZA ROUSTAM came to Isfahan in the cool of afternoon. He was on ass-back; Coral, his man-slave, walked. Roustam's mount had started at Shiraz as a tolerable cob, and had undergone certain metamorphoses on the way. At Surmeh Roustam sold the cob and bought a pony. The difference in price kept the party of three in bread and fodder as far as Yezdikhast. At Yezdikhast the pony was exchanged for a little ass and the price of food for the three to Isfahan.

Mirza Roustam sat far back on the ass. When he sat forward his toes scraped the ground. But at least he escaped the lowest depth of Persian degradation, which is walking. Roustam and his slave-man, you must understand, made a living out of the

art of keeping up appearances.

Coral wore a decent livery, but not the cutlass that a Persian servant should sport on the road. That was because he was so great a drinker of blood that it was unsafe to trust him with edged tools. So Roustam declared. Coral was a kind of Abyssinian, of the colour of stewed tea with a dash of milk in it. Roustam was Persian, handsome, dreamy-eved and athletic. His attire was rich. The brown shawling of his frockcoat was a little worn, but no sensible man sports his best when travelling. The patches on his baggy red breeches were marvels of art, creditable to the industry of Coral. His boots were the weak spot, but the ingenious plan of splashing them judiciously with mud at the start of each day's journey kept the shabbier patches in the background. The saddle-bags before him were fat.

At the caravanseral they made such a fuss about securing the best room that nobody would have dreamt of asking for cash payment for anything at the inn shop. In the best room, a cubby-hole opening on

the common court, Coral arranged the baggage to make the best possible show from outside. He spread out Roustam's only carpet, and Roustam laid himself along the middle of it to conceal the scrap of unswept floor revealed by the central hole. Then Coral massaged his owner, smacking and punching him, and cracking his joints.

Said Roustam: "Fazl Ali, the only friend of my youth with whom we have not lately lived for a month or two or borrowed something from is an Isfahani, and a mer-

chant at that. I have spoken."

Said Coral: "It is well said, Hazret, that beside an Isfahani merchant an Erzeroumi is

open-handed as Hatim Tai's self."

Said Roustam: "There spoke Asaf! Now, boutcha, let us consider how to approach an Isfahani who is also a merchant. Were one to approach with open hand and say: 'O friend, lend to one who approaches with the steps of supplication in the shoes of necessity! what is likely, please Allah, to be the answer?'"

"Hazret, it is likely to be: 'Allah Kerim!'" Coral used the intonation sacred

to choking off a beggar.

"Even so, Coral. One must approach with a long nose and careless air. To him who hath, or appeareth to have, is always given. So hath Allah decreed: He is Merciful and Compassionate! Now, Coral, I have ascertained that my friend Fazl Ali is absent from the city, and will not return for several days. In the meanwhile we must eat. Is there aught in the treasury?"

"Hazret, my shirt-pockets are full of

gold."

Thus, humorously, replied Coral, who did not possess the garment in question.

"Then, Coral, we must sell something."

"The ass, Hazret?"

"Sell the ass! What would my friend Fazl Ali think of a man who has to walk? That was a cold speech, Coral. Have we no spare gear?"

"Hazret, we have each a sufficiency of clothes to hide our nakedness. Otherwise

----''

Coral put two fingers in his mouth, sucked noisily, and held them up. They were understood to represent the state of his master and himself if it were necessary to change their raiment. "The bags are full of stones and leaves, *Hazret*," he concluded.

Roustam, past master in the art of keeping up appearances, at once decided against selling the saddle-bags. "We must arrive as though fresh from a journey," said he; "otherwise there will be no excuse for travel-stains. And to arrive from a journey without saddle-bags—implying, O shameful slander! that we possess not so much as a change of raiment—Penah be Khuda, it will not do! What about selling thee, Coral?"

Coral went green. "Kourbanut-i-shuma!" he faltered. "I am your sacrifice, Hazret, but selling me would take time. And, Hazret, where would you find such another slave as your poor Coral?"

He kissed Roustam's feet. Roustam laughed. "Be content, Coral. The skin is nearer than the shirt, and between the two cometh the slave. I have yet a shirt. Take it to the nearest broker."

He picked up the garment. "Wash it

first, Coral," he added prudently.

All depended on that little sentence. Coral proceeded to wash the shirt in the ten-by-ten tank in the court, where all the inn guests cleansed their clothes and their children and themselves and their animals, besides drawing water for drinking and religious ablutions. And as he rinsed and wrung an acquaintance passed through the court. The acquaintance was confidential slave of an Isfahan grandee: he had only looked in with a message to his master's banker, and would not have seen Coral but for the washing. He invited Coral to a party that night. There would be a few old cronies, the place was an empty house neighboured by empty houses, formality would be absent. When Coral had sold the shirt he bought a square yard of bread, a skewer of meat, and a string of dried apricots for Roustam's supper, and asked leave to go and get drunk. Roustam gave leave and a benison.

II.

CORAL repaired to the empty house, the neighbour of empty houses, after dusk. He was the first to arrive and the first to go. And he was sober, a man with so much on his mind that nothing could make him drunk.

III.

NEXT forenoon, about the time the congregations were pouring out of the Mosques after Namez-i-Chast, a funeral cortège trotted past the Mosque of Lutfulah, at the north-east side of Isfahan's main square.

It consisted of a bier and a rabble. The bier was borne of four: a long-faced Shirazi cameleer at one corner, at the others a Hindu Mollah, a greasy Turkoman chief, and a smart footman of the Prince-Governor's household. They ran as hard as they could: this was for pure kindheartedness and to acquire merit in the next world.

Carrying a corpse is the one thing over which no Persian dawdles. No respectable funeral travels slower than a canter. The reason is that the two angels who wait to cross-examine the deceased about his religious tenets directly he is in the grave get impatient if they are kept waiting. Naturally they take it out of the deceased.

Several of the congregation from the Lutfulah Mosque slipped their shoulders under the bier and helped it on a little way, thus doing a virtuous act. At a corner of the square the Hindu grew tired and surrendered his corner to one of the Chief Executioner's underlings. A little farther on the Turkoman and the Shirazi were replaced by a brace of Kurdish chieftains; at the entrance of the Avenue leading to the Shah Abbass Bazaar a beautifully dressed fop in European electric-sided boots rushed in and relieved the footman. Turkoman joined the crowd behind, the other three went their ways. cession galloped down the Avenue.

It was hard going, with the sky above unshaded by clouds and culminating in a sun nearly white with heat. The dust churned up, head-high. A little way along the Avenue the fop was smitten with an

"Where, please Allah, be we bound, brother?" he asked the Kurd under the other aft corner.

The Kurd opened his eyes. "Why, please Allah, to the corpse-washing house of the parish, I suppose," he returned.

"Thou supposest, brother?" repeated

the fop.

"Please Allah, we be strangers in Isfahan, my brother and I. We have no knowledge of the lying of its several quarters."

Percussion of the Grave and the Questioning of the Grave may Allah Almighty deliver him!"

"Amin!" responded the fop. "But who is directing this?" He hailed the sub-



"The one certain fact was that the fop and the Kurds were put in jail."

"Verily, 'Isfahan is half the world, saving Lahore,'" the fop agreed; "but, brother, I took thee for the kin of the dead."

"My brother and I but seek to acquire merit by helping along the dead: from the executioner: "Where be we bound, brother?"

The little official twisted his head to reply back. "By Allah, I know not. I was at point of asking thee, brother. Art thou not kin of the dead?"

"By thy salt, no!"

The sub-executioner bawled to the crowd: "Who is kin of the dead among ye? Let ! him stand forth!"

There was no response. Only the cry: "Kin of the dead, stand forth!" passed from rank to rank.

The four bearers stopped and eyed one another round the corners of the bier. take refuge with Allah from Satan the Everlastingly Stoned!" said the fop uneasily.

They put the burden down; the subexecutioner instituted an inquiry. Nobody knew anything about the corpse, but someone suggested its instant conveyance before the Ketkhoda of the Ward. It was, therefore, taken up again by the four bearers, deposited before the Ketkhoda's gate, and the Ketkhoda summoned. The result of his investigation was clinching. The body was that of a coarse-faced, oldish man: in the side of the chest was a stab, neatly washed and hidden by the shroud, that explained his death. Everyone turned eyes of suspicion on the four bearers.

"By Al Aziz, I am guiltless!" cried the

four in chorus.

had borne the bier forth a little way, and had sneaked off, one by one, as fresh bearers took their places. How far it had come, and whence, Allah alone knew. The Kurds and the fop were straightway arrested by the sub-executioner, and crowd, corpse, and suspects were marched in search of the nearest Darogha.1

IV.

All the officialdom of Isfahan tried its teeth on the case in vain. The one certain fact was that the fop and the Kurds were put in jail. There was no clue to the perpetrators of the crime; the victim could not be identified, though half the city came to try and do it. The progress of the funeral could be traced back to the south-east side of the great square, and no further. somewhat tactless move of imprisoning the last set of bearers discouraged others who had assisted in the carrying from giving evidence. By evening prayer time the officials gave it up. The best thing, they said, was to bury the body and cease worrying about the affair.

On them descended lightning out of a clear sky. The Prince-Governor of Isfahan would have the inquiry pursued to the end.

¹ Police Inspector.

If those murderers were not found within a reasonable time every official concerned should lose his billet and eat sticks. many unsolved mysteries had happened in Isfahan lately, said the Prince-Governor. He did not add that he was curious to learn the rights of it.

Now search commenced vigorously. Spies and busybodies dragooned the city. three suspects remained in jail, and the Chief of Police took on himself the task of fixing the guilt on them if they did not bribe

heavily enough.

That evening Roustam remarked to Coral: "My heart is tightened and mine eyes are yellow with regret, Coral. To think that so fine an orange should be placed in our hands and we should fear to squeeze it!"

"Belike, Hazret," agreed Coral, "the

juice might prove too sour."

"Whoso seeks to guide the feet of Justice has to be careful lest he planteth one on his own neck," said Roustam. "I see no chance of a profit anywhere, so it is well to keep aside."

And he groaned. There should have been It was perfectly plain. The murderers a commission in the business that had been placed in his hands, but he saw more likelihood of jail unless he kept strictly out of it.

"The prisoners, Hazret?" said Coral. "They would promise, but how to make 13. 35. 35.

them pay?"

EARLY in the morning Roustam went for a stroll in the Shah Abbass Bazaar. spoke with an acquaintance, and directly after betook himself to the jail in a manner that just escaped hurry. He was allowed to interview all three prisoners. The Kurds offered five hundred tomauns between them, the fop two hundred. The understanding was that the sums would be paid to the discoverer of the real culprits when the victims were let loose. Roustam was satisfied with a plain written agreement from the townsman, but from the Kurds he extracted a Cursing Letter after this fashion:

"... If we fail to keep this promise, may Allah curse our mother and father, our sisters, and our children. And may He

smite us with sickness."

Which arrangement, on the face of it, was foolish. The townsman could easily refuse to pay a mere stranger; the Kurds would pay, but had not promised not to take their money back later.

Then Roustam went back to the inn and



"'One hundred and fifty,' said Roustam. 'Paid now.'" "I will pay nothing, but will make thee eat stick until thou tellest me all.'"

demanded from Coral what money remained from the sale of the shirt. He counted the coppers. "Enough to buy us both a good midday meal, boutcha," he said.

"I have arranged it to buy us meals for three days, until your rich friend is home, Hazret," Coral replied, a little worried by an unusual glint in his master's eyes.

"Thou wilt expend it in a belt-stretching meal for us both, boutcha. No need for doling when by Night Prayer we shall own an hundred tomauns. An hundred tomauns,

Coral, furnished by one Sohreb Khan, the Chief of Police."

"Allah's with you, Hazret! Whoever got money from a Chief of Police?"

"Allah is Great, Coral."

"If He can make you wring money from a Chief of Police, *Hazret*, truly He is."
Thus Coral; piously but dubiously.

VI.

The Police Chief of Isfahan was a sorry man that day. The Prince-Governor sent more than once to ascertain what progress had been made. The Chief always replied that he had a clue. And he had most of his underlings fed with sticks on the soles of their feet because they could find no way of fixing the crime on anyone.

At noon a spy came round to report Roustam's transactions in the jail. It looked joyfully suspicious: the Chief sent a messenger at once to Roustam's inn.

A nervous man was Coral as he saddled the ass and received orders to stay and mind his master's extensive gear. Roustam went on his way cheerfully, and was received in private audience by the great man.

Sohreb Khan was a huge man, with the fat face of a vicious child behind a man's beard, the pig-eyes of cunning cruelty, and the swelled forehead vein of implacable

temper.

"Dost imagine, friend, that a sparrow drops a feather in Isfahan and I know it not?" he asked. "It is not so—Mas'llah! What thou didst in the jail but two hours agone is known to me. It seems, friend, that thy knowledge of this crime is extensive."

"I take refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned!" returned Roustam. "Do you imply, Saheb, that I had something to do with the crime? Not I, by Al-Aziz! Though, to be sure, I know of three of the burnt-feathered ones who committed it."

"How canst thou know of the criminals if thou hadst nothing to do with the crime?"

asked Sohreb Khan.

"Why, please Allah, I learnt of them by inspecting the corpse this morning. When, with others, I went to ascertain if the deceased was known to me, a careful look at it informed me who three of the murderers were."

"And who were they?"

"I know not their names, nor, to the best of my knowledge, have I ever set eyes on them. Still, please Allah, it should be easy from my description to find them."

"Then, by thy salt, friend, why didst thou not at once bring this information to me?"

"Why, Saheb-Jam, if I had, please Allah, more wit than all Isfahan put together, should I not make my modakel 1 out of it? Behold, the townsman prisoner is to pay me two hundred tomauns when I clear him, and the Kurds five hundred. I have the written promise of the one, a Lahnet Nameh from the others."

Sohreb Khan roared with laughter. "The Kurds will respect their word, but will slay thee and recover their tomauns later. The townsman will not keep faith with thee."

"But he will with you," said Roustam.
"Pour the Oil of Information into the

Flask of Attention."

"The sums are payable not to me by name but to whoever shall fix the guilt on the true culprits. Will you purchase the documents from me for one hundred and fifty tomauns?"

Sohreb Khan opened his pig-eyes. "How

would that profit me?"

"Do not pretend, Saheb-Jam, that your penetrating intelligence does not perceive the benefit. You will extract two hundred tomauns from the townsman, thus making fifty for yourself. And by forgiving the Kurds their promise you will bind them to you with cords of gratitude. At present you dare not either keep them in jail nor loose them: behold, you shall go to them, and, with a great laugh, say. The youth, my agent, who secured the Cursing Letter from you, did it at my bidding. Behold, I jested with ye: here is the letter, I have no desire to rob you.' Kurds, Saheb, are Sons of Gratitude; they will trouble you no further."

At last the official intelligence was enlightened. "Barak'llah!" exclaimed Sohreb, "I will find the murderers!"

"Even so, please Allah. By your salt, Saheb, your name will resound to Fars! I will tell you the way, for one hundred and fifty tomauns."

"Ten, to be paid when I have the men in

hand," said Sohreb.

"One hundred and fifty," said Roustam.
"Paid now."

"I will pay nothing, but will make thee eat stick until thou tellest me all."

"In one hour a friend of whose identity you know nothing will go to the Prince
1 Persian: Commission.



to cook . . . always dainty dishes . . . well-kept linen . . . in short, as a hardworked housekeeper the Mater had been A1. Self-effacing too. As for her clothes, they liked her old-fashioned ways. She was excellent foil and background to their modernity. And never, never, had she

demanded a latch-kev. was a look on their faces now as if they would refuse it. They had brought the Mater up ex-

"I'm only fifty-three," Mrs. Brayle said. "To-day I feel thirty. Escape has a wonder-

> back?" "To this house, ves -since it's my own," Mrs. Brayle said dryly. "But I'm coming back on latch-key

She had laughedand gonebefore they found their voices.

terms."

Outinthe evening air her sense of exhilaration mounted. She hailed a taxi and was presently rushing through the summer night. Her emancipation was so fresh that trivial details thrilled. The restaurant entrance, when

Here you are at last, 'she began. 'I hoped you'd be back before I went out.'" she reached

it, seemed palatial. And here was her old friend Agatha Hensforth.

Agatha was jubilant. "So you've done

it ? "

"Very much so," Mrs. Brayle agreed. "If you could see my three daughters at this moment——"

"I don't want to," Mrs. Hensforth said

"Come now, Agatha, they're dears in

Dinner over, they went to a theatre. It was a play that their young folk would probably have permitted. "Well, that won't do them any harm—" Mrs. Brayle could almost hear her daughters' voices.

It was during the interval between the

second and the third Act that Agatha Hensforth began to talkabout Rome.



"This was a dramatic moment to treat either as tragedy or comedy."

"But intolerably self-centred."

"Well, yes," Mrs. Brayle confessed.

"This is revolt," Agatha said. "The Revolt of the Matrons. My nephews and nieces think me senile in my forties."

an Italian holiday," she said. "Not a flurried fortnight—a leisurely two months or so. Why not now? And why not you and I together?"

Why not? Her daughters, of course,

would be aghast. Still—"I'll come," she said with decision. "And, as you say, we'll have a leisurely two months."

Going home in the taxi after the play Mrs. Brayle's ears were pleasantly full of sweet-



sounding halting-places—Assisi, Perugia, Cesena—with Rome for the final goal. She fitted her latch-key into the front door with a sense of excitement.

They were in the sitting-room—but with no guests.

"We telephoned the Gonts not to come," Elaine said.

"But why?" Mrs. Brayle asked. She was slowly pulling her gloves off and throwing aside her cloak. The girls gasped as the

blue dress came into view. Elaine leant forward, tapping a warning finger on her chair-arm.

"Just tell us what's wrong, Mater, please."

"I think you three are,"

Mrs. Brayle said.

She felt completely mistress of the situation. Her middle age met their modernity unabashed.

"You're so entirely selfcentred," she said with

deliberation.

"Well!" They stared at her — dumplings with hard currant eyes. She wished the imagery wouldn't persist in her thoughts.

"Honestly now," Mrs. Brayle said, "haven't you thought me useful? Nothing

more?"

"Well, of course, one's mother..." Nancy's effort after coherence had scant success. She babbled. "We just took it for granted ... we thought you liked look-

ing after us . . ."

"Chimney-corner at fifty-three?" Mrs. Brayle asked. Suddenly she leant forward. She let the pent-up passion of her thoughts loose. "Some grown children are like that. They live. They expect their parents to exist—as background, as convenient tools. Well, as I said, I've escaped. You'd better," she ended, laughing, "learn to cook for yourselves. Or engage a more capable servant. Or possibly one of you would consider giving up office work

for domesticities?"

"Never." The chorus was shrill negation.
"I see," she nodded. "Yet you expect
me——"

"But you're our mother. It's your job."
"Not indefinitely," Mrs. Brayle shrugged.

"I bore you, reared you, set you up in life—now I claim freedom. As much freedom

as you have yourselves."

They looked comical and tragic at one and the same moment. Resentment, of course, showed in their volleys of "Ohs" and "Wells."...

Mrs. Brayle got up from her chair, yawning. This was a dramatic moment to treat either as tragedy or comedy. She shot her next bolt with a laugh.

"By the way, I'm off soon for a two months' holiday. Italy. We've a delicious

list of halting-places—Assisi, Perugia, Cesena. After that, Rome. Agatha Hensforth has heard of a nice place to stay at in the Via del Babuino. I love those soft-sounding names. Well—I'm off to bed."

In her room Mrs. Brayle crossed to her glass and stared at herself for a moment. Excitement had given her a colour. Her dress was exquisite. She loved the heavy bronze braids of her hair. *That*—for a chimney-corner? She waved to her own reflection as she turned from the mirror.

TEA TIME.

WHEN mother spreads the table
At evening time for tea—
It is the very nicest time
Of all the day to me.

I love it when the shadows
Grow long across the lawn,
Then mother folds her work away
And puts her apron on.

She goes out in the kitchen
(A cheery place to me)
And puts the kettle on the fire
Then spreads the cloth for tea.

She bakes white fluffy biscuits, And cuts the pink ham thin, She tumbles jelly from a glass, And brings it quivering in.

I love to watch her placing
Each shining plate just so—
And see her put the silver down
Beside them in a row.

And then when we all gather
At five o'clock for teaHome is the very nicest place
In all the world to me.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

Car & Countryside

Things to see when Motoring

Though so much is being done to spoil our lovely countryside there are still innumerable objects and places of interest within easy reach of every great city. The following is the fourth of a series of articles designed to suggest new trains of thought and experience to motorists and others who are willing to forsake the familiar and often monotonous main and arterial roads in favour of the by-ways.

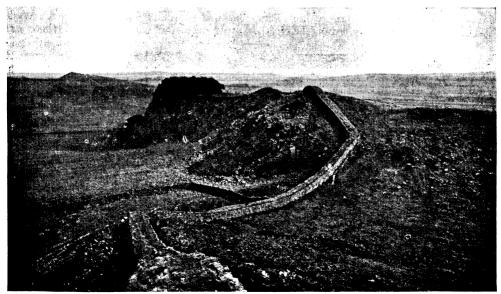
IV.—THE GREAT ROMAN WALL

By W. T. PALMER

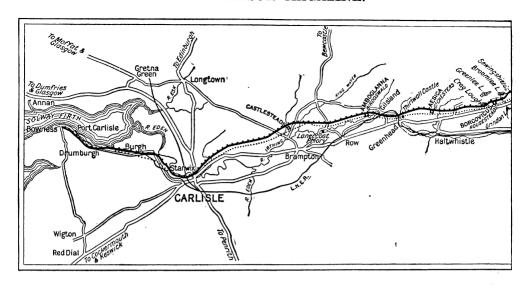
AR too often the motorist speeds along the broad military way from Newcastle to Carlisle built by the famous General Wade in 1747 without being aware that he is travelling alongside a defensive system dating back to Roman times. Relics of camps, castles, turrets, trenches, ditches and even roads and aqueducts are obvious to the alert who travel between Chollerford and Gilsland by the great road. Exploration of the Roman

Wall is easily accomplished by aid of a car. As one who travelled there in the horse days, the writer can assure the visitor that explorations which took a week of long days and hard tramping can now be easily made in half the time, and each evening one can dine and sleep in comfortable quarters, which the old inns and farms sometimes were not.

History tells us that Julius Agricola conquered the northern end of England in his



[Valentine & Sons.



campaign of A.D. 79. To consolidate his position against the still troublesome Picts, he left garrisons at strategic points along the great north-running roads. Later the general, Hadrian, secured the isthmus between the Tyne and Solway by linking the camps by a great wall which extends for 73 miles from Wallsend on the River Tyne to Bowness-on-Solway. Access to and from the North could then only be made through the narrow gates guarded by Roman troops. Each gate either entered a great fortified camp or a mile-castle where a good garrison was kept.

To-day the eastern 20 miles of the Wall have practically disappeared in industrial Tyneside, but from Chollerford on the North

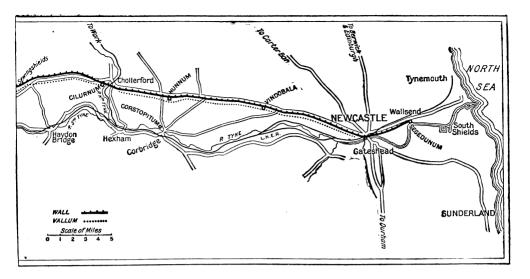
Type westward the works are in good preservation; camps have been cleared of rubbish; mile-castles and turrets exposed and planned, and great stretches of masonry have been refaced north and south from scattered fragments collected within a few vards. The Wall is now practically secure from further depredations. In cultivated fields the stones disappeared long ago, but General Wade was probably the most ruthless spoiler. In 1745 he was at Newcastle with a large force including guns when a message was received that "Bonny Prince Charlie" had broken away from Edinburgh and that Carlisle, toward which he was marching, was in danger. Wade could only send a reply that, as there was

> no road by which artillery could be brought through the mountains, Carlisle must look out for itself. Battle, he clared, would be offered to the Stewart in Lancashire, where the heavy guns could be sent into action to repel the Highland infantry. After the Rebellion of 1745 had failed at Culloden Moor. there were general orders to build many roads, in England and Scotland alike, and here the engineers used wherever possible the line of the Wall, either as a direct foundation or as a quarry for materials.



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ROMAN STREET, CILURNUM.



The Wall had a stormy history after Hadrian finished it in A.D. 120. In the reign of Commodus there was a mighty uprising of Picts and Britons, and apparently Roman rule in the North was extinguished for a time. There must have been some pretty close fighting, for the camps were burnt out, and the Wall and its gates thrown down. There are charred remains of this outburst in the floors laid for the later camps. When Marcellus Ulpius again conquered the land he broke the resistance so thoroughly that smaller garrisons became the rule, and probably at this time the town of Cilurnum (Chollerford) on the North Tyne was estab-

lished with its gardens and other luxuries, which had been hitherto unknown to the fighting men of the Wall.

After this re-conquest the size of some fighting camps was reduced; shattered walls were built on a less thorough plan; gateways were partly or wholly built up, and one guard-house was used at the great double entrances instead of two. Even at the beginning of the fifth century a large garrison was employed on Wall, its outposts and approaches. A Notitia, or muster-roll, discovered at Rome, shows sixteen cohorts of infantry and five "alas" of cavalry with detachments of "Moors" and "men in armour," or about 12,000 fighting men in all. There were soldiers from Greece and Spain, from Gaul and Germany, as well as from Italy. The Wall was held probably as long as any part of the North, but the last Roman legion was withdrawn from Britain in A.D. 446—forty years after the date of the Notitia.

The barrier against the Picts is cleverly placed on the sheer edge of a succession of north-facing cliffs. The camps are placed where a good outlook is possible along the Wall, and every pass or break in the cliffs is guarded. The Roman camp at the Wall



[Gibson & Sen.

VALLUM AT LIMESTONE BANK (WADE'S ROAD ON RIGHT).

departs not a whit from the plan elsewhere a parallelogram with long lines east and west and rounded corners, with gates neatly centred in each side. Usually the Wall



forms the northern boundary on the fighting front, but at Chollerford, Rutchester and other quieter spots, the Wall comes more than half-way down the side, leaving the east and west gates opening into "enemy country." There is evidence, however, that, after the camp was finished, such weak points were entirely built across, and their towers strengthened as foundations for engines used to hurl stone balls, fire-brands, and iron bolts against the enemy. Similar weapons were used along the Wall, for at Housesteads and other camps there are quite a few missiles in the store-rooms.

The principal building of the Roman Camp was the Governor's court and residence, and this was neatly aligned on the centre of the fort; its columned front must have been impressive to the "rude barbarian." The barracks and other houses were packed closely—the passages rarely exceeding a yard in width. At Amboglanna (Birdoswald) there is a street only 22 inches wide. In every other health detail than the provision of light the camps were equal to any modern garrison. Water was brought sometimes as far as 5 miles by a clever aqueduct system.

The mile-castles along the Wall were more Spartan than the camps. These were placed at intervals of a Roman mile in order to guard a narrow gap cut through the masonry. The castle was oblong, with the wall as the short north side and another gate centred in the south wall opposite. The barracks were apparently pent-house buildings of wood which have entirely disappeared. The plac-

GLACIS OF WALL

DITCH OF WALL

BERM

MILITARY WAY

MILITARY WAY

OITCH OF VALLUM

BERM

SUBSIDIARY MOUND

ST! MOUND

ST! MOUND

ST! MOUND

ST!

ing of these castles is wonderfully regular, and yet each comes opposite a definite dip in the defences which must be safeguarded. The castles were placed independently of the great camps, and one wonders whether they are not an older system of defence. The turrets were mere sentry-boxes about 12 feet square, partly recessed into the Wall, but without any egress to the North. Two of these are placed between each milecastle, and the garrison was possibly four or six men. Life in a turret must have been "rough," for apparently no fires were used to prepare food, etc.

Hadrian's system of defence was elaborate: the motorist can also visit outer camps at Bewcastle in Cumberland and away up the North Tyne and the Rede, at points which guard the passes through the Cheviot.

MILE CASTLE

Then came the 73 miles of wall, standing wherever possible on the edge of a steep rocky cliff, and elsewhere fronted by a ditch at least 9 feet deep and 30 wide. The Wall was built of squared stone; its front face was at least 12 feet high, having a breast wall or parapet of 4 feet above the main wall to shelter the sentry from enemy arrows and sling stones. The thickness was about 6 feet, and the inner wall was 8 feet from the turf. The mason-work is wonderful; every block is neatly cut and faced, the outer edge being 10 or 11 inches by 8 or 9 inches and the depth 8 inches. The inner edge of the block is somewhat diminished so that the shape is partly a wedge, the only form which will bind into a strong wall with little help from mortar.

The foundation-stones of the Wall are much larger and step out a few inches; the course above is also of larger stones. The material throughout is a grey crystalline quartzose grit, with a few sections of hard whinstone where quarries of the other are remote, and whinstone is at hand.



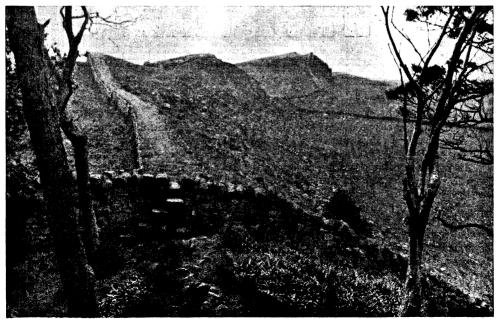
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THE WALL NEAR HOUSESTEADS.

All these stones were, of course, cut out without the aid of gunpowder, and in the quarries fragments are still noticed marked with the old wedges which separated the block for the Wall from the native rock. Some of the works were 7 miles from the nearest point on the Wall, and near Bird-

oswald (Amboglanna) in particular, the soldiers inscribed their legion and cohort numbers on slabs which are still visible.

The wall, with its northern ditch, is, however, only part of the defence. The mysterious "Vallum," or earthwork, which extends from Newcastle to Drumburgh,



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THE WALL AT HOUSESTEADS WOOD,

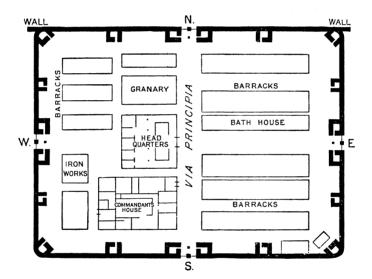
west of Carlisle (67 miles away), stretches at distances varying from 30 yards to half a mile, south of the Wall. The date and purpose of this cannot be placed on a secure foundation. But the Vallum was made of earth thrown out of deep trenches and had its own road in the interior. It was possibly part of Hadrian's plan, as it definitely follows the hollow behind the ridge topped by the Wall. Agricola, however, might have inspired it by his military maxim recorded by Tacitus:

"With me it has long been a settled opinion, that the back of a general or his army is never safe."

In the interval between Wall and Vallum ran the military way of the camp-users, a

edge, and shortly the great camp of Housesteads is visible, a mile away to the right. In dry weather it is possible to drive a car somewhat nearer the camp, turning in at the *second* "Housesteads" sign-board, nearer Carlisle.

Housesteads is the best preserved camp on the Wall; it stands high above ordinary cultivation and away from villages and farms, so that the temptation to use it as a quarry for cut stone has been but small. The plan is just the usual parallelogram, probably dictated by military architects at Rome. The result at Housesteads is that the north gate is pierced through the wall on what has been the edge of a cliff, and the cills or thresholds show no grooves of wheels. Housesteads was one of the stations des-

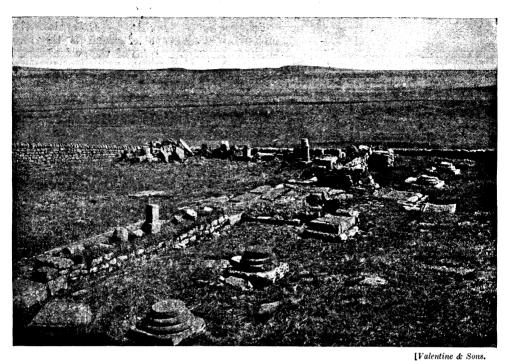


route about 18 feet wide which goes to camps and castles by easy gradients. Probably the ground between the Vallum and the Wall was used as safe pasturage for the Roman horses and cattle.

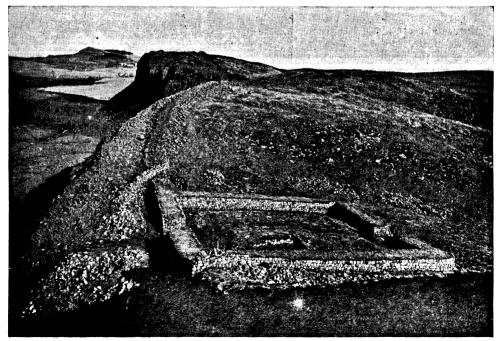
The motorist of to-day travels by road from Newcastle along the line, and often on the top, of the Wall. The first stop should be at Chollerford, where a great camp of five acres known as Cilurnum stood on the North Tyne. There is here a museum of relics, altars, coins, ornaments, from several miles of way, and the buttresses and two piers of the Roman bridge which crossed the river can still be seen outside the camp. The next few miles are partly on top of the Wall, next with a regular piece of masonry visible across a narrow field. At Sewingshields the Wall goes up a steep limestone

troyed in some great revolt, and here the western and eastern gates were narrowed. One leaf of the outer double gate was blocked up, with the opposite leaf of the other, so that any chariot or person was compelled to enter diagonally and pass through a gap in the masonry of the central arch. Half the old guard only would be needed.

Compared with Cilurnum, this Borcovicus was a warrior camp; there are traces of gardens to the west, but the houses were crowded and entirely military. In one room arrow-heads were found, with other fighting stores such as sling stones, and a smithy was part of the equipment. Most of the site has been cleared, and is easy to understand. The camp was burnt out on more than one occasion; in a later period part was used as a moss-trooper's home; even

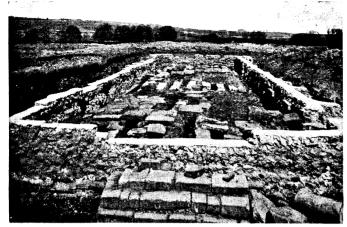


THE PRAETORIUM, BORCOVICUS.



[Gibson & Son.

CASTLE NICK MILE-CASTLE.



CORSTOPHITUM (CORBRIDGE.)

[Valentine & Sons.

later it was shelter for cattle-drovers crossing the wastes between Newcastle and Carlisle.

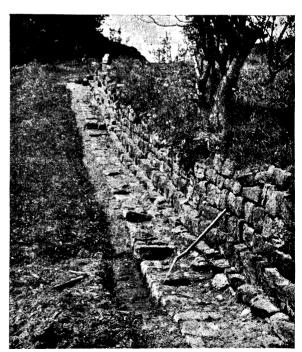
The Wall about Housesteads has been restored and looks very imposing. Just to the east is a break in the hills which has obviously been regarded as a weak place. A great triangle of earthwork was thrust out into the moor, and the ditch in front of the Wall was deeper and wider. One

wonders what manner of raiders and attackers came this way-and most particularly why they came. Famine might send an irruption of cattle-lifters, but the Roman frontier, in the Wall period, was beyond the Forth and steady campaigns were unlikely. authorities hold that the Roman occupation was essentially an affair of soldiers, and that the power of the governors went as far as arrows and sling stones could reach. But there must have been some deepseated and continuous cause of strife which kept the Wall always at war and which caused the complete destruction of camps by gates, overturning their great towers and walls.

An active rambler may put in a couple of enjoyable hours by "stepping westward" from Housesteads camp and rejoining the car beyond Winshiels and Peel fell. This is a splendid ridge-walk, with a bird's-eye of the Vallum and "street," as well as of Wade's road with its whirring speed-merchants. Otherwise the chief sound is the thin pipe of the golden plover, with the longer call of the curlew, and now and again the crow of a cock grouse. Round Crag Lough, where the Wall climbs a great edge of rock, there is always a babel of jackdaws.

The first stage of the walk is through a belt of conifers, and then the descent is steep to House-steads mile-castle, where the north gate has been narrowed until a horseman, but not a chariot, could pass. The north

wall here is 14 courses or 9 feet 6 inches high, the finest specimen of the Wall. The sections over the ridges are sometimes so steep that the builders laid their courses of stone as though they were making a tower instead of following the building level of a wall. The view outwards from the ridge includes the four Northumbrian loughs—Broomlee, Greenlee, Crag and Grindon, the last away to the south beyond Wade's road.



[Gibson & Son.

THE WALL IN GILSLAND VICARAGE GARDEN.

There is a mile-castle in Milking Gap which has not been explored, though an important inscription was unearthed among the ruins. The next mile-castle has been cleared. The rocky declivity of Cats Stairs gives a rough route from the next dip in the wall (which is sometimes merely a thin fence of Romanworked fragments and at others wide enough to walk upon) to the moors. There is a faded path along the grass which gives fine upward views into the basalt cliff with its shivering fragments, and one can walk level to the great rift through the ridge at Peel Crag. Here the Wall swings back to defend the gap; any invader ran the risk of being

farmhouse and outbuildings is seen half a mile of wall has disappeared down to the foundations. Near the Nine Nicks of Thirlwall chives grow wild among the rocks where Roman soldiers introduced them; here and there in the Wall and camps one finds the yellow wallflower which is only found in the North among Roman remains. The wild moorland section of the Wall ends with Thirlwall castle, a ruined Border fortress built entirely of Roman-cut stones. Legend says that the Picts broke through the Wall at this point. It is certainly a weak point, and the Roman garrison was aware of the danger, for three camps in



ROMAN WALL, LOOKING WEST. CRAG LOUGH IN DISTANCE.

[Gibson & Son.

impaled by archers shooting at close range from either flank of the triangle. At Peel the basalt ends and sandstone begins. Here the fosse with a ramp on its outer margin goes uphill like a deep regular fluting, but the Wall has almost disappeared.

So the story goes on—fosse in front whereever possible, the Wall itself touching the crest of the rocks elsewhere, camps, milecastles, turrets in quick succession. At Winshiels the highest point of 1,230 feet above sea-level is touched. Then comes Aesica, or Great Chesters, the water for which was brought by an aqueduct 5 miles long, so contrived that it has only one bridge or embankment in the entire length. The wanderer soon notices that where a support of the Wall may be found within a short distance.

Westward the Wall now follows the crest of steep land south of the Irthing, with several mile-castles, past Gilsland station, and then crossing the river almost opposite the Roman camp of Amboglanna (Birdoswald). Of this crossing Camden says:

The Picts' Wall passed over the river Irthing by an arched bridge.

Doubtless some foundation of this may yet be found, but the labour of clearing the Irthing fields of drift stones will be considerable. The camp at Birdoswald is perched on the edge of a steep cliff which curves round two sides, and one other is

defended by a minor watercourse. Amboglanna is about 5½ acres in extent, and had six gates. The walls are 5 feet high, but little has been cleared. A house has been built in the north-west corner of the camp and its grounds occupy about 2 acres. Amboglanna shows traces of the hasty rebuilding after the dreadful disaster in the reign of Commodus. The Wall is here 71 feet thick, forms the north boundary of the camp, and can be traced for a good way alongside the road. The next point of interest to the motorist is Lanercost's ruined abbey, not on the Wall but plainly built of Roman work. There is a pretty bad hill descending to the Irthing which needs good use of brakes.

Beyond Lanercost the great fortification is less easily traced; as the country becomes lower, there is more cultivation, and the stones have been taken away. The remains are plainest where brooks and broken ground are crossed. Castlesteads and Stanwix are camps of greater or less importance. Carlisle is not on the Wall, which crossed the River Eden a mile to the north. It is visible in fragments only from this point to the Solway. At first the river is used as a fosse,

then a hard mount is followed to Kirkandrews, where a mile-castle is suspected. Every eminence in the marshy level has traces of foundations or ditches. The Vallum, however, does not go further west than Burgh-upon-Sands. Hereabout is a house which Leland described in 1539 as a "prety pyle," adding:

The stones of the Pict Wall were pulled down to build it.

That, however, is a commonplace along the Wall; its stones can be traced in buildings, churches and castles miles away. At the fort at Bowness the Wall and its fosse ends after a journey of 73 miles from the Tyne. The fort is placed beyond the last ford of Solway, so that the Wall could not be outflanked at low tide. The motorist is not, however, recommended to take any great pains in exploring the Wall west of Carlisle: the lanes are narrow and much twisted and some of the bridges have about the blindest turns known in the North Country. The villages of Kirkandrews, Burgh and Drumburgh, as well as Bowness and Port Carlisle, can be reached more easily by taking a good road further inland and running out to each in turn.

THE DOWNS.

YOU call them dull, and desolate, and drear!
To me they smile serenely, as they lie
Spread out beneath the over-arching sky;
I call them very graciously austere.

Their rounded curves are like a woman's breast.

About their sunlit spaces winds blow free!

And at their base the never silent sea

Frets out its endless murmur of unrest.

Green walls of England! Still, and very dear!

Hills behind hills that stretch to some far goal:

Symbols of strength and quietness of soul;

Serene and silent, graciously austere.

L. G. MOBERLY.

Social Reflections



AS WELL TO BE SURE.

- "What are you doing now?"
- "I'm a press representative."
- "Paper or trousers?"

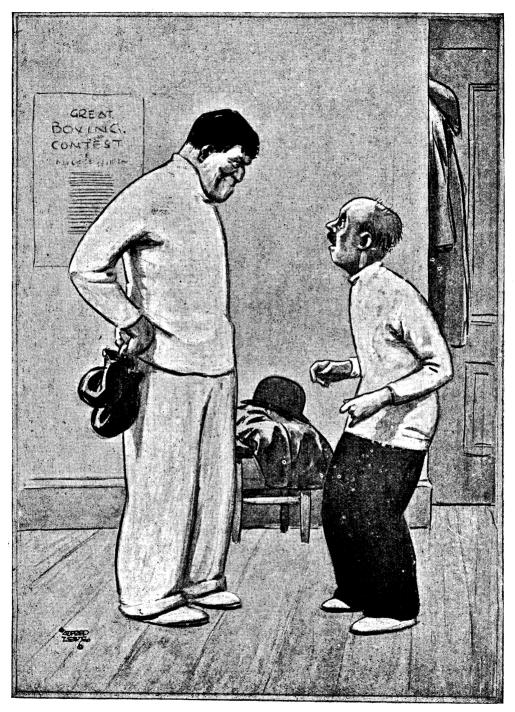


AGREED.

COUNSEL: Do you understand the nature of an oath?

SMALL WITNESS: Yessir. I'm a golf caddie.

COUNSEL (to Judge): My Lord, we can take it for granted!



A STRONG INCENTIVE.

Instructor (to Mr. Jenkins, who has just completed a course of lessons): Yes, sir, you're fit to stand up to most men now.

JENKINS: Men? It's not men I'm concerned about. It's my wife!



AN UNSATISFYING DIET.

"And you say you haven't had anything to eat since yesterday morning?"
"Yus, lady. The only thing I've swallowed since then's been insult."

EXTRAVAGANCE

By EDWARD D. DICKINSON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

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"The Rev. Septimus Winter came out of his dream with a start, a dream all about roses, and the new peal of bells that Sir Robert Founthill was giving to his church; a pleasant dream that meant much to him because his roses had just taken first prize in the local flower show, and he had always wanted a peal of bells.

"Good evening," said the Rev. Septimus Winter. He said it a little nervously, not over-cordially; he was always ill at ease with Dick Parsons. Parsons was inclined to make him see something in life beyond roses, and unconsciously he resented it. He had a vague idea that he, his wife, life in general, were not giving the man a square deal, and yet he disliked the ex-soldier's half-hostile attitude. Parsons, once gardener at the rectory, had lost his left arm, and won the Military Medal. Ten years before he had been a hero, now he was a bit of a nuisance. Of course it had been impossible to keep him on as gardener. The Rector's modest stipend prohibited the keeping of a gardener who was unable to dig. This had been carefully explained to Parsons, who seemed to understand that his departure really was inevitable. But his attitude had been unreasonable. The Rev. Septimus Winter still remembered the actual words that had ended their painful interview: "I know, zur, that if it be a case of the roses or me, 'tis me that must go down." Now that was unreasonable. A gardener must be able to dig. His wife had been full of excuses as usual: "My love; we must be charitable. The poor fellow is naturally bitter, and of course we must do our utmost to find odd jobs for him." She always excused those who rebelled against the actions of her husband, but it was she who usually suggested those actions. In this instance it was certainly she who had insisted on their inability to afford a disabled gardener.

"Er—good evening," said the Rev. Septimus Winter again. "Is there anything I can do for you, Dick?"

"Yes, zur," said Parsons. "'Tis just the usual, I reckon."

"Want some work, I suppose?" said the Rector hurriedly.

"Yes, zur," said Parsons, and waited,

looking straight in front of him.

It was really very difficult, thought the Rev. Septimus Winter, so hard to get a job for a man with one arm; and harder still for a man who never seemed grateful for what was really a charity.

However, he had to say something.

"They're not keeping you waiting for your pension, are they?" He suggested hopefully, "I might be of some use in gingering them up a bit if they are."

"No, zur." Still the same flat voice. "Pension's paid up right enough, but 'twon't go round. Got two growing boys to find

clothes and victuals for."

"I know, I know," said the Rector, and then brightly, "Well, I'll see what Mrs. Winter can do for you, Dick; I expect she'll find somebody who can keep you going for a bit."

"Very kind of her, I'm sure," said Parons. "Thank 'ee, zur."

He touched his cap with a finger and was off down the lane. The Rector looked after his bowed shoulders until they vanished in the dusk, then turned and walked slowly on his way. Roses; a peal of bells; the flavour of his dreams had gone, somehow; they always did after a talk with Parsons. And yet his wife, he knew, had done her utmost for the man. It was his wife who counted. He wondered why Parsons hadn't gone straight to her as he usually did. It was she who found the odd jobs for him, worrying all the big families in the neighbourhood until they probably thought her an unmitigated nuisance. She was a far more capable cadger of jobs than he was, and besides, his time was so limited. There were so many societies now that demanded his attention: it needed so much work to keep up the high intellectual quality of his sermons, and —there were always his roses. He opened his

garden gate, gazed for a moment almost adoringly at the fragrant clusters of flowers, mechanically patted a fat fox-terrier that waddled down the path to meet him, and turned into his dark hall. The second door on the left hid his wife and a cold supper. For a moment he hesitated. Why had Dick Parsons come direct to him? Should he mention the matter to his wife after all? Perhaps he might try himself this time to get the ex-soldier really fitted into some niche. where light labour and modest wages might help to take that hostile look out of his eyes. But then he had said he would tell his wife. and Parsons had made no objections. She could do it better than he, and, besides, she had more time. One further point: if he remained silent, his wife would undoubtedly notice that something was worrying him, and worm the story out of him before supper was ended. He decided to shift the responsibility from his shoulders at once, and opened the door of the dining-room. His wife was already seated at table, making up accounts in a twopenny note-book. She looked up as he entered and revealed a large face behind an enormous pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. A straggly lock of mouse-coloured hair that had escaped from its bondage of hair-pins, and hung down to her nose, was balanced by a similar lock that protruded from her bun and waved in the draught from the open window. She was thoroughly tired out and irritable, but she considered it her duty not to show it. Every day she exhausted her big and untidy body in countless small tasks, and seemed to take a mournful pleasure in doing so. She was always very sad when things went wrong in the village, but would have been sadder still if perpetual goodness had prevented her from discussing the backslidings of her community with her friends. She said in a little, mournful voice:

"What has kept you so long, Septimus?

I was almost giving you up."

The Rector sat down, spread his tablenapkin over his bony knees, and served two helpings of tinned salmon before he answered.

"I met Dick Parsons," he said. "He wants work."

He held out his plate for salad and murmured perfunctorily, "Poor fellow."

His wife opened her eyes wide.

"Why did he come to you, dear?" she sked.

"I can't tell you, my dear," said the Rector, beginning his meal. "It puzzled

me, I confess. I told him, of course, that I would refer the matter to you.

"Of course," agreed his wife. She paused, ruminating, with a small stalk of water-cress hanging from one corner of her mouth.

"He seemed a bit short of cash," the Rector added, not looking at her. "We—er—you had better try to do something at once."

Mrs. Winter wrinkled her forehead thoughtfully. "He shouldn't be," she said. "I know that he got seven and sixpence from Sir Robert last week, and six shillings from Mr. Davenish. I simply can't go to either of them for a day or two."

"Perhaps," said the Rector helpfully, "he may have had to meet unexpected expenses." These were the terror of his own

life.

"No," said his wife. "I'm sure he hasn't. Nobody has been ill in his family; the boys both had new boots a month ago. I got them out of Mr. Sandhey, you know. Mrs. Parsons' dress is still quite respectable—there's nothing. I wonder "—she paused, thinking, and then added mournfully, "I do hope he hasn't been extravagant; it makes it so much more difficult for me."

"Of course, of course," murmured the Rector soothingly, feeling, as usual, torn in two ways, when his wife displayed her amazingly intimate knowledge of his parishioners' private affairs. He admired her for it, because he knew the work it entailed; he knew that she considered it honestly to be her duty, but foolishly he couldn't help feeling that it was almost indecent.

"Will you have blancmange, dear, or some

cheese?"

"Cheese, please, my love," said the Rector. He disliked high cheese, but he knew that unless he ate it now it would appear at the supper-table night after night, getting higher and higher. Nothing was ever wasted. His wife was a wonderful manager. She had to be, to keep their boy at Rugby. He helped himself, wrinkling his nose unconsciously.

"I'll go down and see Parsons to-morrow morning," said Mrs. Winter suddenly. "That will be the best thing to do."

A maid knocked at the door, and entered, clumping in big boots. Straight from the farm-house, she spoke always in a strangled whisper; rather overwhelmed at living in such close contact with the gentry. In spite of her uncouthness, her obvious awe gave the Rev. Septimus Winter a comfortable feeling of almost God-like superiority.

"Well, Mary," he asked kindly, "what is it?"

"Please, zur," said Mary, blushing, "Mr. Goodbody be calling to see 'ee about the choir outing."

He rose from his chair wearily, turning to his wife.

"You will please excuse me, my dear?"
Mrs. Winter nodded sympathetically.
"Poor dear," she said. "You never seem
to be able to eat a meal in peace."

The Rev. Septimus Winter brushed the crumbs from his waistcoat, and passed

slowly out of the room.

Mrs. Parsons paused for a moment in her labour of washing, dried her hands on her apron, and rubbed them soothingly up and down the curve of her hips. The Spanish strain in her ancestry, dating back to the wreck of an Armada galleon five hundred years before, was as clearly marked as though the swarthy foreign sailor had been her own father instead of a piece of ancient history. Black hair, black eyes; an olive tint of skin; a certain graceful fullness of line; definitely un-English in appearance from the crown of her aching head to the toes of her weary feet, and yet in soul more stolidly Saxon than her blonde, disabled giant, pottering about among the vegetables in their tiny patch of garden.

She called out to him suddenly:

"Dick, my man: did 'ee see parson last night? I forgot to ask 'ee afore."

Dick went on pulling up weeds, but answered surlily:

"I see'd un right enough; but 'twern't no manner of use."

Her dark eyes grew a little bigger with alarm. Her voice was a shade higher.

"What did 'ee say, then?"

"Said 'e'd tell his missus. I was hoping 'e'd do a bit of work 'isself for a change."

She looked at him a moment, pressing both hands firmly into the tired small of her back.

"I don't understand 'ee, Dick," she said.
"Mrs. Winter has always been the one to get
the work for 'ee."

"And so she should," growled Parsons, and then, smiling a little wistfully, "I reckon you'll understand soon enough; us'll be seeing the old toad afore the hour's out."

"I hope she'll find something for 'ee quick, then," said his wife slowly. "There bain't sixpence in the house till I get paid for my washing, and the rent's due."

She went back to her work, turning things

over in her slow mind, and wondering a little, but knowing her husband too well to ask any questions.

Outside the sun beat down mercilessly: the lane was thick with dust; dust to the top of the high hedges; dust blowing down the hot wind. Every now and then Mrs. Parsons would come to the door of her ovenhot kitchen, draw a few long breaths of the stifling air outside, and return slowly to her labours. Each time she came out her husband would pause to look at her, wrinkling his forehead, but saying nothing.

Presently Mrs. Winter appeared, walking very fast down the lane, very hot, very untidy, her garden hat over her left ear.

She knocked ceremoniously and waited outside, panting until Mrs. Parsons came to the door, smiling hospitably in welcome.

"Do 'ee come in then, mum," she said.
"'Tis kind of 'ee, I'm sure, to come round in all this heat."

"Good morning, Mrs. Parsons," said Mrs. Winter formally. "Is your husband at home?" She had been looking at him all the time through the open door.

"Take a seat in the parlour, mum," said Mrs. Parsons, and bowed her guest respectfully into the appalling stuffiness of the hermetically-sealed little room. "I'll tell Dick 'ee be here," she added, and shut the door behind her.

Mrs. Winter waited patiently, examining in turn the objects of interest that she knew by heart. The marble clock on the mantelpiece, stationary at half-past two; the portrait over the mantelpiece; Mr. and Mrs. Parsons on their wedding day, dressed within an inch of their lives, staring fiercely out of a red-plush frame. On the table a Bible, an old railway guide, and three china flowers under a glass case. All tokens of respectability, yearning after gentility. On the wonderful flowered background of the other walls portraits of King Edward and Queen Alexandra, highly coloured. Tokens of loyalty and staunch conservatism, whatever opinions the other rooms might hold.

Presently Dick Parsons knocked at the door and came in, holding his cap in his hand. His wife hovered in the background, nervous of something she could not quite understand; ready to interfere if necessary; to smooth over any indiscretions that her husband might commit.

"Good morning, Parsons," said Mrs. Win-

"Good morning, mum." Parsons was standing very straight, watchful, rather

frightened, but ready to stick to his guns in any emergency.

Mrs. Winter came to the point at once. As she often remarked to her husband, "My love, I simply haven't the time to be tactful." This was quite true.

It was a very hot day; she was already tired; her time was short, and a long day's work stretched before her:

"Nonsense. You know perfectly well that I am always willing to do my utmost for you."



"Dick Parsons . . . came in, holding his cap in his hand. His wife hovered in the background."

[&]quot;Parsons," she said, "why did you go to Mr. Winter instead of coming to me as usual?"

[&]quot;I didn't want to trouble 'ee, mum," said

[&]quot;Nonsense," said Mrs. Winter sharply.

[&]quot;Yes, mum."

[&]quot; Well ? "

[&]quot;I was feared 'ee might think I was asking again too soon. I didn't want 'ee to know.' In his heart he cursed the Rev. Septimus for being a spineless old woman.

Behind him he heard his wife catch her breath suddenly; she also thought that the money had gone mysteriously.

Mrs. Winter peered at him through her big

spectacles.

"I want you to be reasonable, Parsons,"

Mrs. Winter went on wearily:

"You know as well as I do, Parsons, that my husband had no work to offer you. That has all been gone into already. The point is that we have to rely on other people who have no particular interest in either of



"Mrs. Winter came to the point at once."

she said. "To try and understand my position. I know you have served your country. I don't forget; whatever people may say to the contrary, I know your pension is not really sufficient. I have tried my hardest to get light work for you; to increase your earnings."

Parsons burst out suddenly:

"'Ee give me the chuck when I came home."

us. You must know what they keep on saying to me: 'He has his pension, hasn't he?' I have to admit it."

Parsons interrupted her.

"How would they like to try and live on it?"

His wife behind him said reprovingly:

"Ah. But they're gentry."

"Well-" Parsons turned on her an-

grily, but Mrs. Winter held up her hand. Quite unmoved, she went on with her statement.

"I have only one good argument in reply—that you are a really careful man; that I know you do not waste any money. Can't you see, if you take that argument away, I have nothing left to say to them; that there is really nothing I can do?"

Parsons said gloomily:

"I reckon 'ee wants to know how I've spent my money."

Mrs. Winter replied quietly: "I do.

You must be reasonable.'

"Dick, 'ee mustn't talk like that." He shook her off.

Mrs. Winter rose slowly to her feet. She was telling herself to be charitable; not to

e angry.

"I am very sorry you have adopted this attitude," she said at last, "very sorry. You tie my hands. I am afraid I can do nothing more unless you think better of it."

She turned to go out, but paused at the door. She must be charitable; she must

do her duty.

"I shall be in at six this evening, if you would like to see me." she said, and added as



"She turned to him sharply. 'What did 'ee pay for these?' she asked."

Parsons threw back his head.

"I won't tell'ee, then. 'Ee pry about, and 'ee routs around, but this ain't no business of yours." He threw out his hand desperately. "I don't want to be rude to 'ee." He stopped. His arm dropped to his side. He knew he could never express himself in a thousand years. Justice! He knew his cause was just, but he couldn't explain. Surely he had rights—he had fought—he didn't ask to be disabled.

"I won't tell 'ee," he repeated, and stood there very red in the face, glaring. His wife caught him by the shoulder. a generous afterthought: "If you have bought anything rashly, I should be willing to give you what you paid for it."

Parsons said nothing. When she had gone his wife turned on him.

"Have 'ee taken leave of your senses, then, talking that way to the Rector's wife? Be 'ee maized or something? How do 'ee think us'll live? 'Tis her that gets the work for 'ee."

He silenced her, with his hand over her mouth. All his anger was gone now. Only emptiness remained; a future he dared not think about, but he would have his moment all the same. He produced a small bundle

from his pocket.

"'Tis your birthday to-morrow," he said slowly. "I bought these for 'ee in Hayworthy market."

She took the parcel, speechless, and un-

fastened the wrapping.

"Oh," she cried, "silk stockings-lovelies!"

"What did 'ee She turned to him sharply. pay for these?" she asked.

Six and six," he said; "they be real silk. Proper beauties."

"'Twas extravagant of 'ee. She gasped.

Wicked extravagant."

He put his arm round her shoulders suddenly, holding her tight. His words came

out in a jumble . . .

"'Ee don't understand, my dear-I had to—I've seen women all over the world, when I was a soldier—you be queen of them all,

lovey-but 'tis clothes that count-leftovers from Parson's wife-left-overs from the Hall—rags they've finished—no chance to look pretty, and 'ee'd beat 'em all if 'ee had the chance. I had to buy 'em for 'ee. I can't never buy 'ee anything. I did want 'ee to look pretty." He looked into her eyes and flung away savagely: "'Tis my own money—I earned it. I can spend it as I want to. I reckon."

He went back to his garden and started to grub weeds, furiously. He knew that his wife was standing at the door; he heard her sobbing, but he would not turn his head. He knew what she was afraid to ask him, and as he worked he muttered to himself, "'Twas my own money—I won't go and see the old toad—'tain't her business—them stockings be for prettier legs than her old posties—I won't ask her to buy them. I won't."

But all the time he knew that he would.

MESSENGERS.

OON, a-swoon In the silent night, Send your gleams Stored with dreams For my dear's delight.

Rose unclose To your velvet heart; Scents be shed Round her head In her sleep apart.

Bird, be heard, Russet nightingale, Music make For her sake Till the darkness pale.

Night, alight With the stars above, Whisper clear In her ear Of my love, my love.

BRIAN HILL.

THE TEARS OF THE GODS

By A. SAFRONI-MIDDLETON

ILLUSTRATED BY LEO BATES

0

THE tribal drums were beating the stars in over the mountains of Nuka

Hiva, Taiohae Bay.

"Boombwah-te-boomb-wa-tap-er-te-tap," came floating on the night wind, intermingled with faint thrummings. Maybe the drumcode operators were broadcasting sad news—the death of some mighty chieftain—speeding it onward by wireless telegraphy as practised in the South Sea Islands for centuries—a message to travel hundreds of miles across old heathenland, to be taken up again and again by the unerring codedrummers and sent into the wind-laden spaces.

"Heathenish sounds," growled the touring Yankee, Adolphus Holly, as he stood alone under the shore palms, shrugging his shoulders. "Waal, I guess that the sooner I trek from here for Massachusetts the bet-

ter!

No doubt the practical Yankee could detect a sinister barbaric thrumming in those primitive sounds—probably they dinned an ominous warning into his avaricious soul.

"Jeewhizz!" His lean face looked ghastly in the deepening shadows as, like faint artillery in the heavens, the deep drumtaps again came floating down out of the silence of the night sky. He looked at the mountains beyond the bay, and the mountains seemed to look at him. He tugged his goatee hirsute. Snip-snap!—his Waterbury watch had stopped.

From his elevation he had a full view of the wild prospect. A yellow beach below, where even the fireflies did barbaric whirls in the mangoes; and, far beyond, a scene to thrill the artistic soul—a remote sea horizon of an angry mahogany hue, streaked with mellow oak-stain, telling where the fierce tropic sun went down over the edge of the Pacific Ocean with a typhoon's dying breath.

Impatiently swinging on his heel, Adol-

phus Holly hurried up the narrow track by Teahapu Valley, then, crossing the boundary line of bamboo and stunted palm, ventured warily on to a cultivated yam-patch that fronted a solitary and neatly verandahed hae or native house.

"Jeewhizz! the dusky little minx, thar she is, has spotted me!" chuckled Adolphus, his lean jaw thrust forward as he eyed Zanomi Le Tui's graceful form leaning against the palm stem by her sire's threshold. Another second and the Yankee had ventured a trysting whistle.

"Presto!"

Adolphus Holly had vanished, hastily

dodged into the bamboo thickets.

"Darn it—she was right," he muttered, when in all haste he arrived breathless down by the beach and recalled how Zanomi Tui had warned him not to come until the morrow

"Zanomi, why roams this papalangi unasked near my yam-patch?—standing like a grinning ghost beneath my island palmswhen thou art loitering near, eh?" commanded keen-eyed O Le Tui, Zanomi's tattooed guardian, of lofty bearing, the Marquesan chieftain who had put the fear of God into Mr. Adolphus Holly's avaricious soul. And Zanomi? She looked guilty enough about something, as she stood there punching up bread-fruit pulp in the domestic calabash. And the girl's grandsire, watching her keenly, knitted his brows, his handsome, much-wrinkled countenance expressing deep anxiety-and a fine contempt for the white man, whose presence had not escaped his keen eyes. A grand old chieftain, one of the last of his type, and of royal blood, every inch of him.

"Aha, 'tis not as you may think, sire," whispered the Marquesan girl, her graceful charm intensified by her haughty mien as she looked the old man straight in the eye.

"Come, sire, I—I will explain," she went on, throwing a suggestive glance to where the old serving-maid, a relic of a mighty retinue, stood within earshot.

Pulling his tasselled robe, a tattered reminder of past splendour, about his loins, O Le Tui followed the soft-footed girl into the shadows, under the giant bread-fruit trees that faced Taiohae Bay.

It was no melodramatic pose, when O Le Tui, leaning in majestic splendour on his carven war-club, awaited the girl's explanation. And a worthy granddaughter of a noble sire she looked, her sensitive nostrils dilating, her eyes glowing like a wondrous miniature of the earnest starry sky as she thrust her pretty chin forward and said: "O sire, am I to blame that I am good to gaze upon in a white man's sight? And have not evil times fallen upon our great line, leaving our people squalid comfortsour yam-patches stolen—our very homes despoiled—only the fish of the sea left—and scant money enough for selling our wretched corals and fruits to help thee in thine old age----? "

The girl's lips quivered through excess of emotion, words failing as she gazed at the handsome, finely tattooed countenance of the old man who looked down mournfully upon her, dignified sorrow expressed in his eyes—eyes that seemed to gaze in majestic contemplation towards the palm-clad mountains of Old Nuka Hiva's past Olympus, old thoughts revived by what the girl had said.

Recovering her composure, her demeanour expressing full reverence for her illustrious relative, she went on: "I am not a low-caste one who would flaunt myself before a papalangi—not I—but listen——"

Tiptoe, her lips against the old Marquesan's inclined ear, she whispered: "This papalangi from across the seas hath money—a lot—and he seeks pearls—will pay a great price—and—and—thou hast pearls?—the great and beautiful white eyes of Papao?—Pah, what has Papao done for us?—our people worshipping a new god—and happy in their worship!—so why let Wooden Papao keep his own eyes when thou couldst sell them for a thousand dollars and dwell by the mountain campong, the old chiefs of your royal retinue and—"

"Awai, by Papao's breath wouldst ask me to sell the tears of the gods—the stone tears from Tangalora's eyes?" Bringing his club down with a great crash on the palm stem, wrath glowing in his deep-set eyes, he demanded: "How came this papalangi

to know that I, or thou—or any—have the god-pearls. eh?"

A swift movement with hand to her brow and Zanomi answered: "O sire, Essi told—she who is the daughter of your old servingmaid, one who faithfully kept thy secrets in the old days, but in garrulous old age hath told her child too much."

The old Marquesan's towering wrath subsided as Zanomi went on: "I have spoken long to this papalangi, have seen the clutching fire of a great greed dart in his blue eyes; he did even ask for my wristlet—this tortoise-shell bangle that is studded with pearls, and I scorned his offer; bah!—a mere ten pieces of silver."

mere ten pieces of silver."

"Chi hump!" The aged Marquesan beat his club impatiently on the sward, a tender gleam welling in his stern eyes to see the girl's shame as she stood before him with shoulders drooping, fingers tearing the puliflowers to shreds. "Child, what would it profit our fallen house if I allow even a chance meeting between him and thee?"

"Profit?—look!" came Zanomi's dramatic reply as she held up two silver dollars. "Is not this profit?"

Like one lurking in the shadows of a sinister brood of thoughts, O Le Tui gazed first at the girl and then at the dollars, and his words came in slow, deep-measured tones as he replied: "Foolish girl, they are bright and round—and—and tempting enough if they can be exchanged for all that is the royal due of such as I—O Le Tui, the last of a royal line."

"By Ramo's love!" Zanomi gasped under her breath, her young heart beating wildly to think that even her illustrious sire thought the papalangi's offer worth his august consideration. Tiptoe again, one hand in fond reverence on his broad shoulder, she whispered: "And, seeing the pearls on my wristlet, the papalangi asked—in oh so soft a voice—' And can you, dear romantic child of the forest, secure me any large pearls, pearls such as I have heard are in the eyes of a few old gods about these parts? They are worth little—oftentimes—but I take the risk, sweet child. Once I bought an old mahogany bureau in my country, and the woman told me 'twas worth much, but, jeewhizz!—'twas a fake, a painted antique, mere matchwood!' And speaking to me in this wise, it was easy to see that he sought to conceal his pleasure when I told him that I knew where pearls big as this could be had for much money."

Zanomi Tui's eyes looked as large as the

loops she made with her thumb and fore-Then a cry of fright escaped her, she even recoiled before the ire that suddenly glowed in O Le Tui's eyes. For the chieftain's mind no longer wavered between the temptation of riches and poverty to be still endured. Indeed, it was easy to see that his heart was full of sudden shame over thoughts that the girl's words had hatched in his mind. Lifting his club, he had brought it down with greater wrath on the dead palm stem, and his voice was hoarse and tremulous with passion as he said: "Wouldst sell thine and my hopes of glory in Noa Noa for a white man's silver pieces —and become as the hated Judas of his creed? What would the valiant spirits of dead Tembrok, Hilbro, and dead Nui-Nuli and the rest of the mighty dead think, to hear that I, O Le Tui, last of their great line, had fallen so low?"

Lips quivering, the old Marquesan stood erect, his gaze towards the starlit sky over his native seas. So perfectly still his tall form—one arm stretched in prayer to Papao—that he looked like some chiselled marble statue, until the grey forelock, touched by the fragrant forest's breath, fluttered over his lofty brow.

"Hear me, O child of my blood. No more talk of this bartering of the sacred nearls"

Shaking a fist towards the ship out in the bay, the incensed old man walked off, leaving Zanomi Tui disconsolate and full of anxiety.

A pretty pass for sad Zanomi. She had been partly educated in the mission room by Calaboose Hill, and kind old Père had almost eradicated her superstitious, blind, inexorable faith in the laws of her people's creed, all that had been grafted on her susceptible mind by the poetic oratory of pagan priests, weird, aged Marquesans, gifted scribes who stood on the forum stumps of the villages, telling wonderful legends concerning the power of the gods, Oro, Papao and mighty Tangalora. Her unsophisticated mind had quite thought that her aged sire was converted enough to fall in with her plans. Frank by nature, and hating deceit, she had been deeply troubled by the thought that she must plan by stealth to retrieve O Le Tui's depleted fortunes. Therefore, quite unforeseen, the hauteur and wrath of her proud grandsire, since poverty had been O Le Tui's cry for many a weary What must she do now? A sad business, since she had promised the papalangi, Holly, much, even to accepting a few silver dollars on account.

"Foolish old man to let the great chances go by, when she, a woman with a woman's eyes, could have played so fine a game, enriching them all." Musing in this wise, Zanomi sighed deeply over the evil of things.

TT.

HALF an hour passed, and Zanomi still sat by the lagoon, gazing on her dim reflection. sighing, womanlike, as she caught sight of her tattered calico robe. How faded the crimson design, even the green sash fraved and faded by the tropic sun to a mouldy pea-green! Alas, but for her grandsire's ridiculous sense of duty to heathenish gods, she could dress as befitted a maid of royal blood. Tessamoa, her friend, had married well—and beautiful she looked in her muslin gown and that Parisian hat! True enough, it was the faded cast-off head-gear of Madame le —, Père H—'s housekeeper, late wardress of Ill Noue convict settlement; but it looked stylish. And still communing, Zanomi tore the hibiscus flowers in her hair to shreds. "Pah!—these are worn by

With lips apart and eyes aglow she turned swiftly from her reflections.

A handsome Marquesan youth, stepping out of the shadows, stood before her. A strapping fellow he was, arrayed in faded pareu, the muscles of his bronzed arms developed to their full strength through incessant toil on the coffee-plantations.

Tamariki, Zanomi's lover, listened long and patiently to the girl's story.

"Awai!" he cried, a mist rising to his eyes as he came to understand the drift of the whole business. "Tis foolish to aspire for such things, risking thy sire's vengeance. And, Zanomi, it seemeth to me an awful thing to sell the great god-pearls to an infidel papalangi. Your grandsire is old, and the aged think wisely; to betray the faith of a god is a grievous thing. Aye, better for thee and me to crawl in rags and bay for food as the dogs bay than to sell one's soul everlastingly to the dark powers."

Speaking thus, Tamariki led the trembling girl along the beach. Then, kissing her hand, he went on in gentler tones:

"I know that thou art ambitious to dress in richly coloured silks, as do the pale vahines (white women) and—and, forsooth, I too have long wished for a good flannel suit—and a striped calico shirt—and a bungalow facing the sea—for thou and me—one with three rooms, and—and——"

"Aha!—you would?—and how nice 'twould be, for thee and for me, dear Tamariki," Zanomi exclaimed, her hands clasped, eager fire glowing in her large eyes as her swift ear detected the note of regret and of deep meaning in her lover's voice. And

there in the shadows Zanomi and her lover whispered long, exchanging mutual confidences, fright in their hearts as the old bread-fruit trees moaned and listened; and if sad old trees can hear, plainly enough the trees of the grove overheard this:

"True, Tamariki, the papalangi hath the money and would buy swiftly without stint if the pearls were big—big, mind you—I know that much. The papalangi thinks I am smitten by his charms and would surely trust me, and not wish to go

"'Papalangi, I have come!"

to the cavern where wooden Papao stands

"Not he, dear girl. I know the papalangis better than that!" broke in Tamariki, shaking his head moodily. More superstition afflicted his soul. But still the woman tempted—another Eve under the palms—and no prophetic hint to tell either her or moody Tamariki how it would end! "And he, my grandsire, would never know the truth, how we had gone by moonlight to the old Marea temple ruins at the feet of the mountains where stands hid the idol with large pearl eyes, the most sacred pearls in our Isles—the two big tears from Tangalora's all-seeing eyes—so they say, pah!"

"Aue!—not so loud. Were one to hear 'twould mean death—to you—and death's grief for me," said the young Marquesan, as he stared anxiously out at the seaward stars. How changed his demeanour as she placed her fingers in his hair and whispered: "I have faith in thee—thou art clever—and even the white men, and Père H—the missionary, have admired your beautiful shell-work, your polishing admired by all."

Tamariki, being an artist, flushed deeply, and then fell in with her plans. And be it known that Tamariki was renowned for his wonderful shell-polishing, many a tourist having paid well to possess one of his beautifully carven cameos, cut into marvellous perfection with naught but a rusty nail! And the pearls that he made had deceived many a curio-hunting tourist!

III.

Adolphus Holly sat in the grog-shanty by Taiohae beach, enjoying a repast consisting of fried bonita and baked yams sprinkled lavishly with taro-sauce. His demeanour and lackadaisical actions suggested a mind plunged into deep meditation. Things seemed to be running too smoothly! had seen Zanomi Le Tui on three secret occasions since the old Marquesan chieftain had spied him hanging about his yam-patch after dark. And the ambitious girl had, at last, promised to procure, for a certain price, the big pearl-eyes of a god—pearls that she knew were hidden in a cavern in the mountains. The cute Yankee's head was endowed with enough philosophy to tinge his erstwhile sanguine reflections with scepticism. Why did the case-hardened traders at the bar discuss their splendid deals in copra so lustily and with such evident satisfaction when pearls large as walnuts could be obtained not two miles from Tajohae beach?

"Jeewhizz!—I've got it, I guess; solved the mystery. Zanomi has cottoned to me—a white man—knows I've got money. Got me share of good looks too," he muttered, a grin illuminating his lean jaws as he rose to his feet, pulling his goatee with much satisfaction.

"Off 'is 'ead! I reckon," said the Australian shellback, stroking his bushy beard as the Yankee, chuckling to himself, passed out of the bar footway into the deepening

twilight.

"Waal, a fine night for such a deal," he muttered, as, hurrying along the beach, he looked seaward at the mahogany-hued sky which, streaked with leagues of pea-green, told where the tropic sun had gone down. "Time she turned up, I guess."

He glanced at his watch, irritated beyond measure at not hearing the signal, the call of the tribal drums. Swift shadows fell as he loitered, until a faint glow made radiant the south-west—moonrise, large and low on the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

"Darn the heathens—telling the time by their infernal drum-taps—and the moon

Boomb-wa-boomb-wa-tap-er-te-tap," came the first faint pulsing and banging of the drum-codes, telling folk in the distant villages that Papao's portals (the moon at sea) were visible for the eyes of all the faithful. Hurrying his steps, the Yankee's lean jaws became set, for he realised the risks attending his venture. Opposite the Moi Moi lagoons he sighted the canoes, like vast seashells roaming the dark night waters, paddled by dusky mermen and mermaids.

"Jeewhizz! tedious work, sure!" he chuckled as tall bronze-skinned men stood erect on the outer barrier reefs, their long dark arms poised ere they disappeared, or swiftly reappeared, Marquesan divers seeking pearls by moonlight. Passing under the bread-fruit trees, he stopped short.

"Papalangi, I have come!"

Zanomi had stepped noiselessly from the shadows. Tamariki, unknown to the Yankee, lurked in the background, watching to see that the papalangi played no tricks with his beloved. A swift interchange of words on vital matters, and Zanomi asked the great question: "Quick, papalangi, 'tis fair that you now hand me the silver money, and then I go straight and get the god's eves—"

"I guess not. When I hold the pearls, then pretty Zanomi gets the coin, savee?"

"Aha, a wise papalangi," Zanomi ex-

claimed, throwing the white man a contemptuous glance, no sign visible of her disappointment. She had quite thought the Yankee would part with his dollars and trust her to go alone to get the big pearls. Tamariki, overhearing, smiled his superior wisdom, since all along he had declared that Zanomi had too much faith in the childishness of the papalangi mind.

Adolphus Holly, tugging his goatee, with commendable courage tramped a mile with the Marquesan girl, Tamariki lurking in the immediate rear.

"Farther still?" he asked, the iron of suspicion grating in his voice. "A lonely place, I guess," he went on, his right hand gripping the revolver in his hip-pocket. A hundred yards more and his face took on a grim expression as he stared across the solemn grandeur of the moonlit scene: vast rocky gullies, tiers of basaltic rock fronting unapproachable chasms, rising grandly, ever rising, up to the huge waists of the mountains. His sight becoming accustomed to the gloom, his amazement was evident. was not the low thunder of the leaping cataracts, gleaming like ribbons of molten silver in the moonlight, nor the lines of plumed palms on the ridges of the higher altitudes (like regiments of giant warriors in battle array), but the great hewn basaltic blocks that made the Yankee stare so. he was standing on the threshold of the vast ruin of an amphitheatre built in a bygone age, stone tiers of an arena rising gradually and revealing unrivalled workmanship, telling indisputably of some past civilisation in the South Sea Islands.

"Papalangi, the silver money, hast it ready?" asked Zanomi, soft appeal in her glance as her face hovered a second in the glimpsing moonlight.

"Waal, I guess I have—when the time comes," came the fierce, almost brutal reply of the Yankee as he, too, peered into the shadows.

"Papalangi, no harm will come to thee through me. I swear it by Papao's halls and by Ramo's soul," said Zanomi, who unerringly read the swift glances of the white man's eyes and the knitted lines of the lowering brow. "Twas your own wish to come—thou hast tempted me with the silver and—and I am here," murmured the Marquesan girl, a sudden sting of shame in her heart.

"Don't cackle! Where's the idol?—Quick! I guess I want to trek from this heathenish hole," broke in Mr. Holly, his

little eyes shifting violently as he gazed into the four quarters of the vast gloom around him

Zanomi, clutching the white man's coatsleeve fearfully, led him over the roughhewn steps of the ledges until they stood before a large cavern entrance, a cavern unknown to the French gendarmes, who had sought far and wide to destroy the old idols that were known to be hidden in the mountains.

"Jeewhizz!" Adolphus Holly stood dumbfounded, when, taking two wary steps forward, he found himself inside the highroofed cavern and standing in the presence of a huge wooden image, beautifully carven, its blind bulged pearl eyes seemingly staring him straight in the face! The carven lips agape, the huge shell-like ears protruding, it looked anything but an insensate lump of polished mahogany as the sculptural silence of its insensate grin, according him a sinister welcome, voiced forth a vast wooden suspicion of the reason for his presence! Greed overcame the natural awe that overwhelmed the Yankee at his first swift gaze. Another second and he had stepped forward, and, ere Zanomi could stay him, had struck "Pearls, right enough!" he muttered, his gaze riveted on the glowing gems of wondrous beauty and size.

"Aue!—papalangi!"

"By thunder—what d'you do thet for?" growled the white man fiercely, for Zanomi, stepping forward, had blown the lighted match out. Even the brave girl recoiled before the Yankee's infuriated glance. And Tamariki, lurking near, clenched his fists, determined, when his fiancée had possession of the pearls, to inflict a wild punch on the papalangi's lean face, if he could not manage two punches.

two punches.

"Aue, papalangi, we might be seen if you show light. And 'twould mean death to you were we caught here—together."

Ignoring the girl's terror, the Yankee, fearing that her mind was wavering, stepped forward, and without ado stood tiptoe and tugged the pearl eyes of Tangalora brutally out of the wooden face—how easily they left their deep sockets!

"Awai!" Zanomi cried, recoiling in horror from the sight of a wooden Tangalora standing there, his big carven face a blank, his eyes torn from their sockets, only a grinning, sightless, skull-like physiognomy visible in the faint glimmer accorded by the moon when the big palm leaves at the cavern entrance stirred to a breath of wind.



"Papalangi, you forget—the silver money?" cried Zanomi. "Quick, I say—" "Ah, sensible papalangi," she added as Adolphus Holly took forth a leather bag that clinked musically—not many dollars, but a fortune to a Marquesan woman. And, oh, the visions of a Parisian hat and of diaphanous robes that rose before her

enthralled, romantic mind. Alas, even in

the enchanted Isles of Polynesia, the folk know disillusionment complete. Zanomi put forth her hand to grab the bag of silver coin. A groan escaped lurking Tamariki's lips. As for Adolphus Holly, he swung on his heel and stood open-mouthed, eyes wide, erect, as though turned to stone by the outraged eyeless god behind him. And, no wonder, for, with club raised and an inexor-

sought to make explanation; strange words

escaped her as she peered through the moon-

lit gloom, attempting to make a swift sign

we---" She rushed forward as though she

would whisper swiftly in the old Marque-

"'Tis there! the idol!—and—O sire—

to her enraged grandsire.

san's ear.

able glow in his deep-set eyes, old O Le Tui stood at the portal of the cavern, effectually barring their flight!

The Yankee turned towards the girl—had

she tricked him?

No! Zanomi did not dissemble as she stood there, horror and agony on her face at being suddenly confronted by her royal grandsire.



"Cursed invader, thief of the night, betrayer of the women of my race," said O Le Tui in sombre, quiet tones as his right hand gripped his war-club. Adolphus Holly recoiled before the accusing fire in those noble savage eyes. Zanomi's swift mind

feet, moaned in his grief. They had just dragged the huge idol down the slopes and into a cave of deeper seclusion, where the pearl-eyes could stare on in the changeless gloom unknown to all but O Le Tui and his few faithful followers. And be it known that

Tamariki had told the sad old chieftain all: how he and Zanomi had plotted to outwit the white man; how they had removed the idol's eyes and substituted valueless imitations that would quite deceive Adolphus Holly, gems that Tamariki had sat up for three nights polishing—should the papalangi demand to see the idol! O Le Tui, hearing the true facts, lifted his eyes to the stars over the palms, and forgave.

Indeed, the old chieftain half regretted Tamariki's sad resolve—Tamariki full of the love of life in the great springtime. "Since thou art willing, showing no fear, proving thy great love for a daughter of my line, I forgive as the gods will forgive, knowing that neither she nor thou meant to deceive

me utterly."

O Le Tui took the young chieftain by the hand, and with tears in his eyes bade him rise, for the ominous death-drums had begun to pulse, telling the arrival of the inexorable hour. Another moment, and Tamariki stood among the hushed assembly of mourners on the silent beach near Moi Moi lagoon. No sadder sight could be imagined than that impressive scene, telling of the old-time Marquesans' great faith in their gods and of their stern adherence to the inexorable laws of their heathen land For, as the tribal drums pulsed the death-chant and the sad news was taken up by the distant code-drummers and sent afar, Tamariki led the mournful procession that bore dead Zanomi Le Tui down to the sandy beach that faced the lone Pacific Ocean. With what reverence the death-priests toiled, the dusky mourners standing voiceless as bronzed statues beneath the moonlit palms, and only the mournful wail of the winds disturbing the awesome stillness.

"Aloah! Aloah! Awaie! Awai!" came

the farewell lamentations, as that narrow catafalque, the death-canoe-Tamariki its solitary living occupant-went seaward, headed for the low swollen moon on the ocean's rim, the pale portals of Noa Noa! For, Zanomi Tui, daughter of a royal line, must not be buried in the coarse earth, but must go to Papao's halls by way of the silver pathway on the deep night waters. Old O Le Tui's voice was full of grief as he stood amid the decrepit remnant of faithful followers of the old dynasty, his eyes staring at the pale constellation to the north-east as the canoe went seaward. And, as the awed assemblage watched, they saw the dark blade of the relentlessly moving paddle whirl and fade and whirl before the vast yellow tunnel-way, the half-submerged moon. But Tamariki was happy, enthralled with his faith, as he gazed down upon his dead love, her hands clasped on her bosom, a smile of content on her lips. For the priests had arraved her, as befitted a royal maid, in the vestal bridal robe, that she might be wooed by the mystery of the deep-sea tides, clasped in Tamariki's arms.

O wondrous martyrdom-well may the tears of such gods turn to stone! For Tamariki must never return, since, faithful to the stern edicts of his creed, the young chieftain has taken the place of the deathpriests, is accompanying his beloved down into the deep waters, down, down to the feet of mighty Papao. For in the canoe's bottom a hole is bored, and the frail craft is slowly but surely filling with water. How breathless the mourners as, ever and anon, they get a glimpse of that voyaging catafalque and of the flying paddle that is bearing. Tamariki down the silver path towards the low sea-moon—a large coral stone fastened to the feet of the dead—and of the living!

DREAMS.

VERY wonderful are your wings, O bird of dreams—very wonderful are your wings I have pursued you into the forests and down the glades,
Under the portals of tired trees with their purple dusks,
And where the rivers run gaily down to the laughing sea—
Into the hush of twilight, into the starry night.
Wearied at last of laughter and tears and passion and toil,
I have pursued and found you—wonderful bird of dreams.
Out of the heart of sunset—with the grey day drooping—dead.
You fly with star-born visions home to my hungry heart.
Very wonderful are your wings, O bird of dreams—very wonderful are your wings.

MARJORIE D. TURNER.

Bird Life in the London Parks Morodith Fradd

A TITBIT.

(Photographs by the Author)

IVCH has been written of the flowers and the beauty of Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St. James's Park and Regent's Park, and countless thousands know of those beauties by repeated personal visits, but probably few have any idea of the care taken, with such success, by His Majesty's Office of Works,

under the control of Sir Lionel Earle. K.C.B.: K.C.V.O., Permanent Secretary, that the Parks shall create a happy hunting-ground for innumerable British and foreign birds. Observant visitors, especially those with knowledge of country life or acquaintance with foreign shores, may espy a bird which attracts their attention among, and in comparison with, the homely and cheeky London sparrows, but they probably nover give a thought to the care of those in charge of the Parks that these feathered visitors shall find, in the centre of the roaring and bustling

metropolis, surroundings and quiet that will induce them to stay awhile.

The superintendents of the various Parks and their assistants, skilled observers who have made an intensive study of birds, are always alert to note and report upon any new-comer.

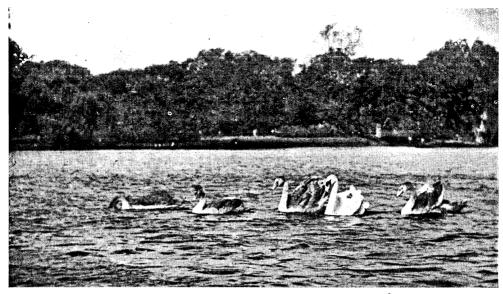
Dealing with Hyde Park and St. James's



PELICANS ON THE ROCKS, ST. JAMES'S PARK.

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R



CYGNETS WITH THEIR PARENTS CROSSING THE LAKE, REGENT'S PARK.

Park is Bird-keeper Hinton, one of those quiet observant students of nature you would expect to find as keeper on some old country estate. His knowledge of birds and their habits eminently fits him for his responsibilities in caring for the welfare of the regular frequenters of the trees and shrubs and offering a safe and welcome harbourage to passing strangers. He told me how over thirty varieties of birds had

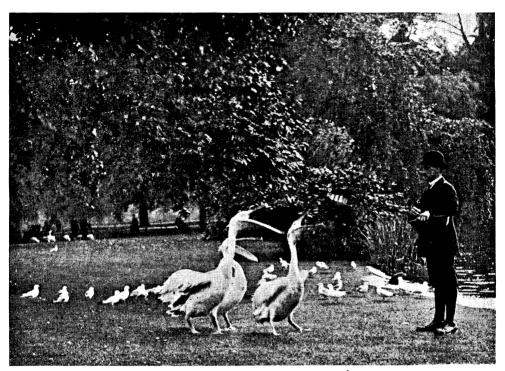
nested in the two Parks; of a small colony of jackdaws and peacocks in Kensington Gardens; of a glorious red-headed cardinal seen on the Long Water; of a family of fly-catchers in Hyde Park; of the big damage done to greenhouses in Hyde Park in the spring when mallard ducks take the air; of such welcome travellers as wood wrens, willow wrens, garden warblers, chiff-chaffs, reed warblers, sedge warblers, and



BUCKINGHAM PALACE, FROM ST. JAMES'S PARK LAKE.

white-throats, and of swifts dipping and calling over the Serpentine and Long Water in May, June and July. Yet again he had a story to tell of an owl, wiser than many a Londoner, who has for years frequented a tree in Hyde Park between the houses occupied by the Superintendent and the Inspector of Police. Sometimes this bird perches on a post just outside Hinton's house on the island in St. James's Park.

In that beautiful natural dell behind the Serpentine, a spot that might be miles away in the country instead of adjacent to the —which, by the way, does not seem to disturb the "actors"—at the attempts of one of the herons to stand on one leg and look wise while two rabbits—perhaps "not old enough to know better"—take turns to hop close to the bird and sniff. One will then do a wild charge, sending his mate flying into the heron, with a resultant loud shriek, the flapping of large unwieldy wings and the frantic waving of long and lanky legs. Seldom do the herons attempt to retaliate upon their tormentors. Then, in answer to the rabbits' war-cry of drumming



KEEPER FEEDING THE PELICANS IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

busy thoroughfare of Knightsbridge, Hyde Park possesses a "circus" which seriously rivals any other. The chief performers—clowns every one—are the half-dozen rabbits. To watch these agile little fellows gambolling, their over-back jumping, their poses as they quiz their human audience, their famous "disappearing acts," and their jumps through invisible hoops, is as fascinating as it is funny. But their "star turn," in which they seem to work in couples, is the chase, the encircling and general bamboozling of the staid and solemn herons. Crowds standing two deep along the railings will shout with laughter

feet, which no doubt sounds to the birds like the roll of battle drums, they are met by such a "mass formation" of indignant fur that they leave the velvet sward and join their confrères in the middle of the little stream that runs through this picturesque corner, and then motionless await the arrival of a careless member of the finny tribe who, mistaking the bird's legs for weeds, will be promptly caught and swallowed. All this occurs in what may be called the "greater ring," but in the outer rings of this natural arena may be observed the antics of the sparrows who feed from the hand, the marshalling of her brood in



SIR LIONEL EARLE, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.B.

"bathing order" by the mother duck, the combative objection, by the smaller birds, to the arrival of the pigeons on the prowl for supper, and, now and again, the commotion caused when a waterrat appears, for he is noted for his partiality to "chicken" for supper. In keeping with the whole entertainment are the constant musical interludes, of extraordinary beauty, wafted by the breeze, from the throats of innumerable Thousands of Londoners birds who are filled with rapture at the

sights they see when on holiday in the country have no idea of the joyous half-hours that can be spent, studying Nature at her best, in this wonderful area of rural tranquillity in the very centre of the world's busiest city.

The pelicans in St. James's Park are a source of interest to Londoners and visitors alike, but it would be well if those who feed them would exercise a little discretion, both as to what they give and how they give it. On one of my visits with a camera I was shown one of these birds cooped up alone and suffering from a great gash in the bag under its



RENDERING FIRST AID TO A WOUNDED SWAN.



KEEPER WITH "BILLY," THE WHISTLING DUCK, IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

bill, caused, it is believed, by the top of the railing over which it was endeavouring to capture some tasty morsel held out of reach by a timid or thoughtless visitor. Recently the best pelican has died from an internal complaint caused by bad feeding, and as the official food is fish, freshly bought each day, it is fairly certain that his death was due to some thoughtless offering of bacon-rind, which, for some unaccountable reason, many people seem to think a food peculiarly adapted to these birds.

Few of the thousands who visit St. James's Park have any idea of the importance of the little promontory which juts out into the lake where the pelicans can always be found, and upon which is the picturesque centuries-old cottage. Practically the whole of the ground is occupied by a gigantic well and the pumps used in keeping the waters clear, while on the surface are numerous cages for convalescent birds, and cunningly devised trap cages, necessary when special birds have to be captured. Most surprising of all on this spot, pheasants are reared. A gentleman of distinction on this lake is "Billy," the whistling duck, who has a curious shrill call somewhat like that caused by the escaping steam from a boy's engine. No matter where he is, on hearing his protector's whistle Billy will come racing across the water, all the time "letting off steam."

During the winter other visitors, in addi-



CAGE FOR AILING BIRDS, ST. JAMES'S PARK.

tion to the familiar gulls, are numbers of tufted ducks and pochards. On more than one occasion over eighty tufted ducks have been counted on the Serpentine, and one pair is known to have stayed through the summer and nested. Fieldfares and redwings are also winter visitors, while during the very cold weather early this year a pair of goosanders were seen.

It is hard to understand the mentality of the good man who wrote to one of the suburban papers a while ago and stated that in his opinion, Regent's Park was one of the two ugliest parks in England. It hardly requires the photographs which accompany this article to disprove this absurd statement, but possibly the following facts with regard to the birds and their sanctuaries will increase the admiration which all normal people have for this beautiful and peaceful spot.

The swans on Regent's Park lake number



KEEPER'S HOUSE, ST. JAMES'S PARK.

about forty. It would be difficult to imagine a more lovely sight than these birds swimming in formation from one side of the lake to the other: grace and dignity personified. In common with other people, I have had sympathy with a swan whose leg is twisted upon its back, thinking that some dire injury has befallen it, but this is the bird's equivalent to our own comfortable position of crossed legs. In the winter months, when visitors are few, waterfowls are fed with corn, and they eagerly look out for waterman Harris with his tin. So well known is he to the birds that they will feed out of his hand. During the severe weather of last winter the waterman's first duty in the morning was to break up the ice so that the birds could have a bathing pool, and when once a swan got into it there was keen

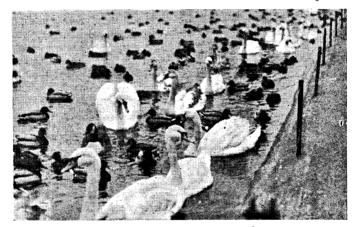


RATS BEWARE.



A COCK PHEASANT IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

The special permit granted me bvLionel Earle took me into many little-known beautiful nooks and crannies in Regent's Park. I saw moor-hens on their nests with their young, and birds one would expect to see only in a country hedgerow. The songs from boughs and treetops drove out all memory of the clang and clamour of the street, and gave one the sense of peace and security characteristic of the woods and fields in the depth of the country.



WATERFOWL ON THE LAKE, REGENT'S PARK.

rivalry among the birds to enlarge the swimming place. There is a mystery regarding four of the swans which greatly interests the Superintendent: they appear every morning and leave at night, but where they go in the interval nobody knows.

It has been suggested that there are too many birds on the Regent's Park lake, but there are stretches of water unseen by passers-by, which, together with the lake itself, would quickly be overgrown with weeds were it not for the picturesque feathered family who swim up and down.



WATERFOWL IN REGENT'S PARK

On one of the islands I was introduced to the waterman's ever-eager hunter, an Irish terrier who does incalculable service in the destruction of rats, ever the enemy of anyone attempting to rear birds.

The Superintendents of the Parks, and the men under them, witness many examples of Nature's wonderful manner of working. Superintendent Campbell told me that thousands of starlings fly City-wards daily about an hour before dusk, and although he has been up very early he has never seen any in the morning com-



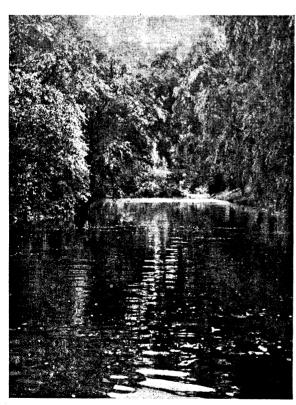
FEEDING THE BIRDS, REGENT'S PARK.

ing from the City—where do they go? for new species of birds to introduce Sir Lionel Earle is ever on the look-out among the many rare ones he has been

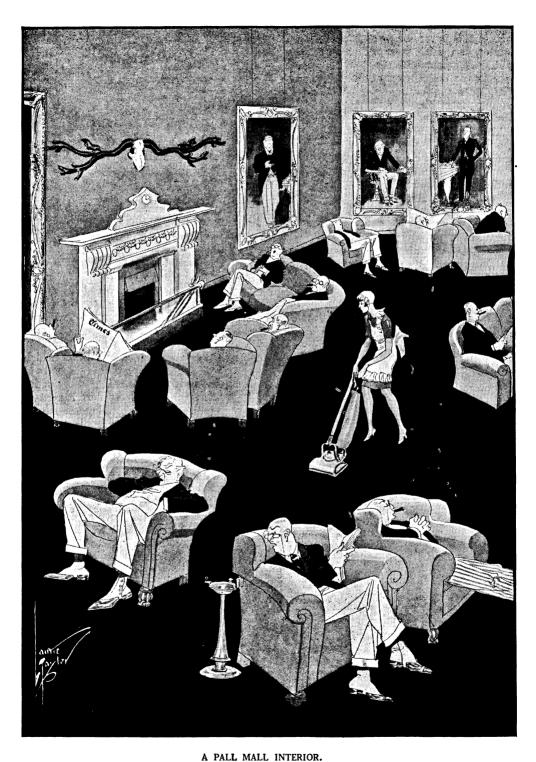
responsible for bringing to the London Parks.

A complete list of birds which at one time or another have been seen in the several Parks under the jurisdiction of His Majesty's Office of Works, either on migration or as occasional visitors. would total nearly a hundred. In Bushey Park nightingales sing, a kingfisher nests and fishes, a cock pied blackbird and crossbill have been seen, and woodcocks flourish. In Richmond Park pheasants and partridges are so plentiful that Sir Lionel Earle took a shooting party down lately to thin them out. It cannot be too strongly stressed that these birds, many of them migratory, and several annual visitors, would never pay the visits they do were it not for the exceptional knowledge of the men in charge of the Parks, and their painstaking care in providing sanctuaries and other enticements.

London can well be proud of its Parks, and it certainly owes a debt of gratitude to those who do their best to populate them with so varied a representation of the feathered world, from far and near.



A LITTLE-KNOWN BACKWATER AND BIRD SANCTUARY
IN REGENT'S PARK.



"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

BRITAIN'SOLYMPIC BEST

By CAPTAIN F. A. M. WEBSTER

HEN the athletes who have been chosen to represent Great Britain at the IXth Olympiad march into the new Stadium at Amsterdam on July 28th to take part in the solemn opening ceremony and to swear the oath of amateurism that is required of every competitor, they will carry with them the high hopes and the best wishes of all sports-loving British men and women.

This will be the fifth Olympiad I have attended, and I am looking forward to that awe-inspiring hush and that little thrill of personal pride as the teams of clean-limbed, perfectly trained athletes of both sexes march round the arena and the national flags are dipped in salute as the royal box is passed.

One looks back over the years and remembers epic episodes when excitement rose to fever pitch and the hearts of the keyed-up spectators almost ceased to beat. There are never-to-be-forgotten pictures in one's memory. Plucky little Dorando entering the Shepherd's Bush Stadium in 1908 at the end of the 26-miles Marathon Race from Windsor to London, a modern Pheidippides, who almost paid the supreme price, struggling on, collapsing on the track, lifted up to stagger on again, and at last literally carried past the winning-post; A. N. S. Jackson, the great Oxford miler, beating a bunch of American world-beaters in the 1,500 Metres at Stockholm in 1912:

the war-worn vete-



[Graphic Photo Union.

THE AUTHOR COACHING AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

carrying off both the 800 and 1,500 Metres Championships at Antwerp in 1920; and, finally, the wonderful, unorthodox little Scotchman, Eric Liddell, winning the 400

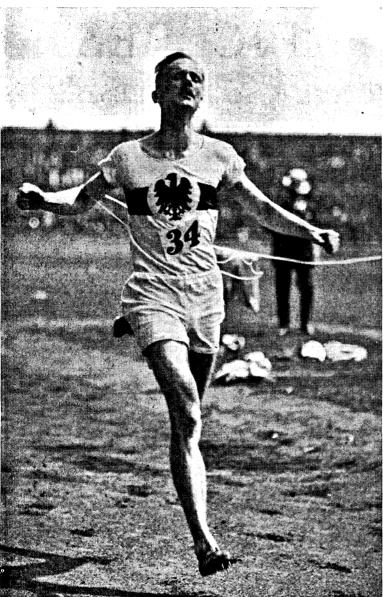
all Liddell's race stands foremost in my memory. Here is the description I wrote within a few minutes of the event:

"The six who qualified turned out at

6.30 for the final. When they went to their marks the order from the inside was Johnston (Canada),

(Great Britain), Imbach (Switzerland), Taylor and Fitch (U.S.A.), with Liddell (Great Britain) on the outside string. Butler started standing account of his strained leg, but got well away at the crack of the pistol; it was, however, little Liddell, in the worst berth of all. who at once caught the eye as the runners came the first

Butler



GERMANY'S BEST ATHLETE.

Otto Peltzer holds two world's records. He beat D. G. A. Lowe in 1927 and returned 1 min. 51\frac{8}{5} sec. for a Half Mile. They will meet again at Amsterdam.

Metres and breaking world's record at Paris in 1924.

During the last twenty years I have seen many world's records broken, but of them

[Sport and General,

"All round the banked arena people were

round bend.

possible to who was leading the rest of the field, but the Scot was on his own. Imbach never showed up in the straight, but Fitch, Butler and Johnston were having a tremendous tussle. by grudging inch, Butler had to let the American up on him as he himself stole a foot from Johnston.

It was im-

their feet cheering madly, and as if by

magic hosts of Union Jacks appeared above the heads of the raving crowd as Liddell ripped through the tape into the arms of the Britishers who were waiting for him. For a moment the cheering lasted, then from the loud-speaker came, 'Hullo, hullo. Result of the 400 Metres. Liddell (Great Britain) first. The time, 47\frac{3}{5} sec., constitutes a new world's record.'

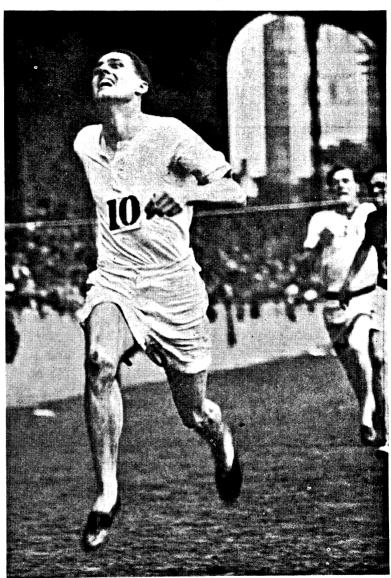
"Again the great roar of cheering went up, and there were long minutes before the announcer could tell us that Fitch, of America, was second, and that Butler, who ran second in this event to Rudd. of South Africa, at Antwerp, was third, and Johnston, of Canada, fourth.

"Thrill followed thrill, for the flags went up, a big Union Jack in the centre, a little one to the left, and the Stars and Stripes to the right, and again came that hush as all the spectators stood and the band played the British National Anthem. Then came crash upon crash of applause Liddell and walked Butler across the grassplot and vanished down the stairs to the dressingrooms."

I have quoted the description in full in the hope that it may convey to the reader the atmosphere of the Games and

something of the thrill of one of the greatest races ever run.

The modern Olympiads were started on the site of the ancient Games at Athens in 1896, and America has never yet been beaten in the all-important track and field athletic section of the celebrations. The supremacy of the United States has, however, been strongly challenged. In fact, nothing saved her from defeat at



[Sport and General.

ENGLAND'S GREAT HOPE.

D. G. A. Lowe, C.U.A.C., in a typical finish. He won the Olympic 800 Metres at Paris and is holder of the World's 690 Yards record and two English Championships.

Antwerp but the introduction into the programme of that seldom seen event, Slinging the 56-lb. Weight. The year 1920 marked the emancipation of Finland from the Russian yoke, and Finland cele-

brated her freedom by very nearly achieving an Olympic victory.

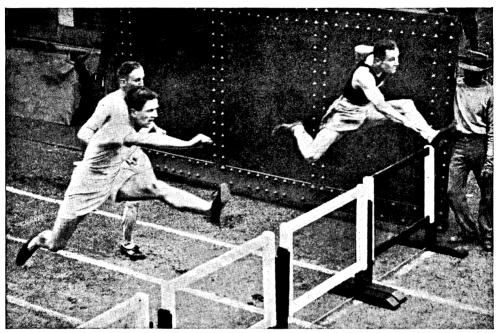
Upon the track that world's wonder, Paavo Nurmi, made his first appearance, finishing first in the 10,000 Metres and second to J. Guillemot, France, in the 5,000 Metres; upon the dusty roads Hannes Kolehmainen took the Marathon title; across country the Finns, both individually and as a team, were first, and in many of the field events they proved supreme. V. Tuulos won the Hop, Step and Jump; in the Javelin Throwing event Finns took all four first places;

Sprints, Pole Vault, Hammer, Low Hurdles, High Jump and Team Race.

The last Olympiad, which took place at Paris in 1924, revealed a reshuffle in national efficiency. Hitherto one had subconsciously arrived at the following classification: Sprints, hurdles, jumps and relays—America; Throwing events—Finland; Middle distances—Great Britain or America; Distances and Marathon—Finland or France.

At Paris all one's preconceived notions were upset.

There were taking part upwards of two



[Sport and General.

OLYMPIC HURDLERS.

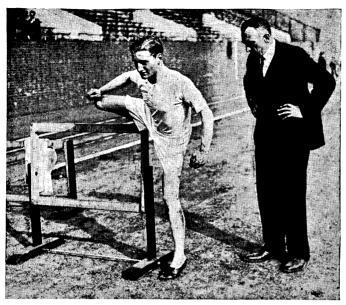
J. Gibson, U.S.A., leading, has recently set a new world's record mark by running 440 Yards over Hurdles in 52\frac{3}{2} sec., but T. C. Livingstone-Learmonth, C.U.A.C., nearest the camera, was unlucky not to beat Gibson in this particular race. Lord Burghley, C.U.A.C., the centre figure, may beat them both at Amsterdam.

in the Shot Put they were second and third; in the Discus first and second, and in the 56-lb. Weight event sixth.

Meanwhile British athletes, who had made but a poor show at Stockholm in 1912 and were expected to be too war-weary to do any better at Antwerp in 1920, produced surprisingly good form. The British Empire, in fact, took first places in the 400, the 800 and the 1,500 Metres Flat Races, the 110 Metres Hurdles, the 3,000 Metres Steeple-chase and the 1,600 Metres Relay Race. Italy won the Walks and Sweden the Long Jump. America was still supreme in the

thousand athletes, representing some fortyfive nations, and the American team was said to be the best that had ever come from the United States. In twenty-seven events the Americans scored twelve first places and made five of the nine new world's records that were accomplished. Of the five new Olympic records the United States established two, and one of the two performances equalling previous Olympic records was also done by an American. Finland again proved to be America's most dangerous opponent.

A year previously I had seen Paavo Nurmi at Stockholm lower the world's record for



[Sport and General.

TEACHING AS A FINE ART.

Lawson Robertson, America's Chief Olympic Coach, gives a lesson to Lord Burghley in the art of High Hurdling.

1 Mile to 4 min. $10\frac{2}{5}$ sec. This runner was to prove himself the outstanding athlete of the Paris Olympiad. He achieved four victories, and in three of them bettered the existing Olympic record. He won the 1,500 Metres in 3 min. $53\frac{2}{5}$ sec., the 5,000 Metres in 14 min. $31\frac{1}{5}$ sec., and finished first in the

3,000 Metres Team Race in 8 min. 32 sec. His time for winning the 10,000 Metres Cross-Country Race was 32 min. 54 5 sec.

But little behind Nurmi in merit of performance was his fellow Finn, Willie Ritola. His time of 30 min. $23\frac{1}{5}$ sec. for 10,000 Metres on the track took nearly 12 seconds off the previous world's record, and in the 3,000 Metres Steeplechase he made a new Olympic mark of 9 min. $33\frac{3}{5}$ sec., nearly half a minute better than the previous best. Also, he finished second to Nurmi in the Team and Cross-Country Races and the 5,000 Metres Track Race.

Both these marvellous runners will again represent Finland at Amsterdam.

the Paris track On Great Britain sprang a big surprise upon the United States by winning the 100, 400 and 800 Metres Races, and a further surprise was created by the Americans themselves winning the Shot, Discus and Hammer events. besides placing third and fifth in the Javelin Throw, for the world was beginning to regard the throwing events as becoming more definitely the province of the Scandinavians with the passing of each fresh season.

Of the Americans, incidentally, H. M. Osborn, who was later to increase the world's High Jump record to 6 ft. 84 in., im-

proved the world's Decathlon record by nearly 300 points, and R. Legendre, who had not been found good enough for inclusion in America's Long Jump team, set the world's record for that event at 25 ft. 6 in. in the course of the Pentathlon contest.

A picturesque figure of the Paris Olympiad



[Sport and General.

A POTENTIAL RECORD BREAKER.

C. Paddock, holder of many records, is seen coaching Eddie Sudden, who he says will some day eclipse all previous short-distance records. was Georges Andre, who took the Olympic oath of amateurism on behalf of the competitors of all nations at the Colombes Stadium. I well remember how Andre, as a nineteen-year-old representative of France, came to London in 1908 and surprised everyone by tieing for second place in the High Jump at 6 ft. 2 in., and I remember him again at Stockholm, by which time he had established his claim to recognition as a high hurdler. Then came the War, through

any country who has ever taken part in five Olympiads.

Andre's association with the Games coincides with a period of athletic history in which the whole of the world's records at the Olympic distances or in the Olympic field events have been broken. No fewer than nine of these records, as has been seen, were set up at Paris four years ago, and yet further records have come on the books since the last Olympic Games took place. Dr. Otto

Peltzer (Germany) has run 500 Metres in 1 min. $3\frac{3}{5}$ sec., and 880 Yards in 1 min. $51\frac{3}{5}$ sec., the latter performance having been eclipsed, it is said, by Lloyd Hahn, U.S.A., who returned 1 min. $51\frac{3}{5}$ sec. on an indoor track. D. G. A. Lowe (Great Britain), who won the



GIRLS VERSUS GREYHOUNDS.

[Sport and General.

Athletic science is fully developed in the United States. The relative speeds of greyhounds and girl sprinters has been ascertained by actual experiment.

which he served from beginning to end, and yet remained fit enough to finish fourth in the 400 Metres Low Hurdles at Antwerp and fourth again at Paris four years later, world's record being broken in both races.

Andre is now nearly forty years of age and, incredible though it may seem, there is every chance that he will represent France again this year, for he is very fit, as he told me when I saw him a few months ago. Should he achieve his ambition, he will enjoy the peculiar distinction of being the only athlete of

800 Metres at Paris, has run 600 Yards in 1 min. 10\(^2_5\) sec., and Paavo Nurmi (Finland) 3,000 Metres in 8 min. 20\(^2_5\) sec. New relay records have been made in America and Germany; among the hurdlers J. Gibson (U.S.A.) has returned 52\(^3_5\) sec. for the 440 Yards Low Hurdles, and Paavo Yrjola (Finland) has still further increased the world's Decathlon record from 7,710 points to 8,049 points.

In the field events even more wonderful performances have been achieved. H. M. Osborn

has cleared 6 ft. 8½ in. in the High Jump, and H. de Hart Hubbard, a small American negro, 26 ft. 2 in. in the Long Jump. This latter record was disallowed upon a technicality, so that his own previous best performance of 25 ft. 10½ in. still stands. Of the other Americans, W. Sabin Carr has pole-vaulted to the amazing height of 14 ft. 1 in.,

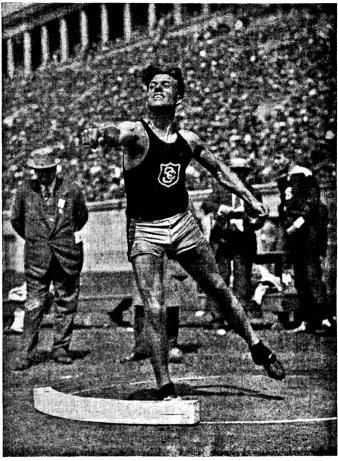
and Clarence Houser, who won the Olympic Shot Put and Discus Throw in 1924, has thrown a discus 158 ft. $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. Then there is the new Finnish javelin thrower, Eino Penttila, who by throwing a javelin 229 ft. $3\frac{3}{20}$ in. has added more than ten feet to the world's record, held previously by Gunnar Lindstrom, of Sweden.

So far as the forthcoming IXth Olympiad at Amsterdam is concerned, one cannot feel safe in predicting success for any particular athlete. All one can say is that world's records of every sort will be challenged.

A few weeks ago it appeared that, short of a miracle or an accident to Sabin Carr, U.S.A., who had cleared 14 ft. 1 in., no one could hope to beat this American boy in the Pole Vault. Now, however, Lee Barnes, joint holder of the Olympic title, has cleared 14 ft. 13 in., and either man may beat 141 ft. at Amsterdam. Penttila, too, appears to stand out head and shoulders above other javelin throwers, but form varies from day to day in this event, and Bela Szeppes (Hungary), Schlokat (Ger-

many), S. Lay (New Zealand) and E. Degland (France) have all thrown between 212 and 219 ft. Houser's Discus figures have been closely approached by Glen Hartranft, who has reached 158 ft. $1\frac{1}{8}$ in., while 153 ft. has been beaten by P. J. Bermingham (Ireland), H. Hoffmeister (Germany), Ville Niittymaas (Finland), and the two Hungarians, Karl Egri and Koloman Marvalits.

World's Shot-Putting record of 51 ft. has stood to the credit of the late Ralph Rose, U.S.A., since 1909, but will be threatened this year by Houser, who has beaten 50 ft., and the German Hirschfeld, who has recently recorded 50 ft. 6 in., while Kalle Jarvinen (Finland), the nineteen-year-old son of an old Olympic Champion, has a personal



[Sport and General.

A GREAT HEAVY-WEIGHT.

Clarence Houser, U.S.A., won the Shot Put and Discus Throw at the Paris Olympiad. He holds World's and Olympic Records in the Discus. He is here seen Shot Putting and may break record in this event also.

record of 49 ft. 10 in., and never did less than 48 ft. in competition last year. The huge Americans, H. Schwaze, J. Kuck, G. Hartranft and R. G. Hills, have all beaten, or been within an ace of beating, 50 feet time and again.¹

Hammer-throwers are more scarce than ever this year, and M. C. Nokes (Britain) may well achieve an Olympic title, if he

¹ Since this article was written, John Kuck, U.S.A., has exceeded Rose's 19-year-old record with a put of 51 ft. 01 in.

can beat the Swede, O. Sköeld, who beat him in the A.A.A. Championship last year; but neither is likely to disturb Pat Ryan's world's record of 189 ft. 6 in. made in 1913.

America has several high jumpers who can beat 6 ft. 5 in. and one who has done 6 ft. 7 in., but Britain has no one available who has done more than 6 ft. 3 in. In the Long Jump the only man likely to challenge de Hart Hubbard is the South African hurdler, S. J. M. Atkinson, who is said to have cleared 26 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in. in the 1927 Natal Championships.

Atkinson, incidentally, was unlucky to lose the 1924 Olympic High Hurdles by the thickness of his breast after hitting the last fence. This year he is as fast as ever, I am told; but, even so, he will be hard put to it to beat his fellow South African, G. C. Weightman-Smith, who, with Lord Burghley and Fred Gaby, has touched British record time of 14½ sec. If he is fully extended, as he will be by such men as the Americans, L. Dye and C. D. Werner, both of whom have returned 14½ sec., I believe that Weightman-Smith may even break the record of 14½ sec. created in 1920 by Earl Thomson, of Canada.

If Gibson's time of $52\frac{3}{5}$ sec. for the 440 Yards Low Hurdles is accepted by the International Amateur Athletic Federation, it will knock no less than $1\frac{3}{5}$ sec. off the

record at present held jointly by J. K. Norton, U.S.A., and Lord Burghley, Great Britain. On the other hand, Lord Burghley is a great fighting finisher, and the other Cambridge Blue, T. C. Livingstone-Learmonth, who has been nursing a game foot since the Oxford and Cambridge Sports, has already run a great race with Gibson in America, in which the Englishman was unlucky to lose through mistaking the position of the finishing-posts.

In the Flat Races anything may happen. J. E. London or H. H. Hodge might find the form to win the Sprint, but Charles Paddock, now a veteran, and Chester Bowman, in the States, have been credited with 9\frac{3}{5} sec. and 9\frac{3}{5} sec. for 100 Yards respectively, and Roland Locke with 20\frac{2}{5} sec. for a furlong. There are also Frank Hussey, who ran as a schoolboy at Paris, and Paddock's protégé, Eddie Sudden, who, the Champion says, will one day upset all his own records. The Germans Corts, Kornig and Houben should also find a finalist among them.

For the 200 Metres we have undoubtedly a great runner in the Cambridge University President, J. W. J. Rinkel; but he may be even better at 400 Metres.

The 800 Metres, I think, will provide perhaps the greatest race of the Games. Lowe, Peltzer, the three Martins, hailing respect-



[Sport and General.

THE PERFECTION OF TECHNIQUE.



[Sport and General.

L. S. BARNES, U.S.A., HOLDER OF THE OLYMPIC POLE VAULT TITLE.

He is reported by vaulting 14 ft. 1\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. to have exceeded by \(\frac{3}{4}\) in. the World's Record of 14 ft. 1 in. established by Sabin W. Carr, U.S.A., this spring.

ively from America, France and Switzerland, or Lloyd Hahn, might well still further decrease the world's record, but I think Lowe will retain the laurels he won at Paris four year ago. Peltzer, I hear, has so badly damaged an ankle that he may not be able to compete.

As to the distances over 800 Metres, it is dangerous to venture a prediction. One knows the form of such men as Nurmi, Ritola and Hahn, but cannot yet say, since the track season in Europe has scarcely begun, how our young British runners, Moore, Frith, Beavers, Langridge, Ellis, Oddie, Green, and a host of others, are going to shape, but I think Ellis may develop into a real Olympic champion at 1,500 metres.

In connection with our own athletes it is freely admitted that on the track and in the hurdles we have not held our own with foreign athletes in the past, although we have seldom been outclassed. With the field events the case is different. In this connection "we have every reason for failure, but not a single excuse." Our downfall has been due entirely to our own negligence. We have made half-hearted attempts to teach a lot of old dogs new tricks, but until recently have refused to face the true task of inculcating a love of these delightful body-building and healthful exercises, with their complement of perfect technique and muscle control, in the minds of our schoolboys.

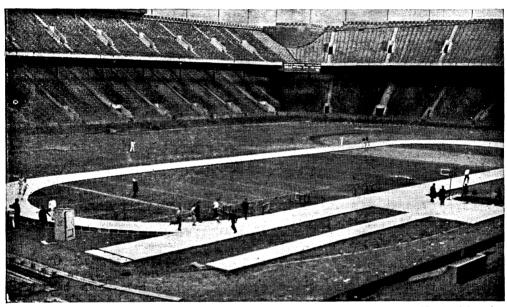
No athlete, no matter how naturally gifted, can become a really first-class hurdler, jumper, pole-vaulter or throwing man, unless he acquires the proper technique so early in life that it has become second nature to him to do things in the right way without conscious thought by the time he is old enough for really serious competition.

In common with other amateur coaches and some professionals, such as Alec Nelson and W. G. George, who are thoroughly interested in the science of athletics, I have had hundreds of boys through my hands in the last half-dozen years, and the results of

scientific coaching are becoming apparent in the case of such boys as G. M. Moll, who at 16 years of age recorded 5 ft. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. High Jump, 124 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Discus, 131 ft. with the Javelin, and returned 17 sec. for 120 yards (3 ft.) hurdles; the 17-year-old boys, E. H. Darley-Bentley, Javelin, 141 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; H. G. Young, Pole Vault, 10 ft. $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., and the 17- and 18-year-old G. Dyas, 120 Yards Hurdles, $16\frac{1}{10}$; J. Simpson, Long Jump, 22 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in., and H. A. Simmons, High Jump, 6 ft. While F. R. Webster at 13 years of age won the Bedfordshire Colts Pole Vault Championship at 8 ft. 2 in. These boys are Olympic Champions and World's record-

cricket is catered for in England. Every scholastic institution has its duly qualified athletic adviser, and it speaks volumes for the United States system that no man may take such an appointment until he has served a long term and passed out from the College for Coaches.

Then again, America is plentifully supplied with perfectly equipped grounds. A photo of the famous Franklin Field, Philadelphia, appears below. Look at the extensive seating accommodation and realise that every seat is at a premium when a big athletic match is in prospect, and you will understand how little an American institution has



[Sport and General.

FRANKLIN FIELD, PHILADELPHIA.

America has the most wonderfully equipped sports fields in the world. In wet weather a board track is put down to enable the athletes to continue their training.

breakers in the making, but they are only the cream of a lot of first-class talent that is being produced at the schools by coaching and through the medium of such meetings as the Bedfordshire County Junior and Colts Championships, the Public Schools Sports Meeting, and the visits of such famous clubs as the Achilles and the L.A.C. to the public schools to decide athletic matches.

It must be remembered that in the race for Olympic honours America starts with a halter-long lead from the rest of the nations. In the first place, she has vast constituencies of schools, colleges and universities where athletics are encouraged just as seriously as to worry over finance, which is the bugbear of every club secretary in England. Again, the reader will notice from the illustration that when the track and grass are too wet for use a board track and runaways are laid down to enable the runners, jumpers and hurdlers to continue their training without those annoying interruptions on account of bad weather which do so much to retard the preparation of our own men.

During the winter months, when English athletes can only run across country and university men and schoolboys are catching continual colds, young America makes use of splendid buildings with good board tracks.

But, all said and done, it is willingness to experiment, an early start, good coaching, and plenty of the right sort of scratch competition that account for America's amazing success in track and field athletics.

Germany, whose athletes will make a big bid for Olympic honours at Amsterdam, is developing along different lines. Indoor meetings and outdoor board tracks are as yet unknown beyond the Rhine, but good coaching and the right sort of competition have been available ever since athletic reconstruction began after the War. where the Americans are apt to concentrate upon the good individual, without entirely neglecting the masses from which he has appeared, it is Germany's policy to produce athletes in bulk and to take a chance that world-beaters will eventuate in due course. as Peltzer, Hoffmeister, Hirschfeld and Schlokat have done.

Go to any town you like in post-War Germany and you will find great numbers of athletes, nude except for a pair of shorts, practising as a drill the appropriate movements for shot-putting, javelin or discusthrowing, all together in a class and in perfect time. Mechanical aids, such as chest-expanders, are used to help build up the muscles which will be required for particular events, and great use is made of the cinematograph, and particularly of slow-motion pictures, to show the athlete his faults and also the perfect form displayed by the best men.

All Scandinavian and a good many other Continental athletes derive a great deal of benefit from the sort of Winter Sports that we, in England, so seldom enjoy.

There is no doubt in my mind that the knack of throwing is learned and the proper muscles developed very early in life by foreign boys who have endless opportunities for snow-balling, while ski-ing and skating develop endurance, speed, and the all-important sense of balance and rhythm, which are absolutely essential to success in field events and by no means unimportant considerations to the runner.

Then again, Scandinavian and Continental sportsmen begin their athletic education at a very early age and have, moreover, the peculiar quality of patience which is required to master the really difficult technique of such field events as throwing, shot-putting, pole-vaulting, and high and long jumping.

For these events every athlete can build up the necessary speed and strength; the difficulty lies in co-ordinating the muscular action and in so timing the effort that maximum performance may be achieved with the least expenditure of energy.

The picture of the Hungarian javelinthrower, Bela Szeppes, which appears with this article, portrays an essential and characteristic stage of the javelin throw. I have taken pictures of the other half-dozen best men in the world at the same psychological second, and have found that in the whole seven there is not the least variation in the position arrived at at this particular stage of the throw.

What it really amounts to is this. Great Britain, on account of our national love of cricket, the practice of athletics at the universities and public schools is relegated to an unsuitable time of the year, when weather conditions make the pastime a pain rather than a pleasure; and, until lately, little or no adequate coaching has been available, and, therefore, boys who wish to make athletics their grown-up sport usually come to the game too late ever to gain any great degree of efficiency. On the other hand, coaching in cricket has become almost a fetish; yet there are, to my personal knowledge, hundreds of boys who would hail athletics as an alternative summer pastime with unmitigated pleasure, and why not? Cricket is admittedly a magnificent game, but does it follow that we must all play it for lack of alternative sports which have just as good body and character building attributes?

One thing is certain: the appointments of such famous athletic Blues as G. M. Butler to Lancing, W. G. Tatham to Eton, G. R. Renwick to Charterhouse, and W. R. Seagrove to Glenalmond, have been an unqualified success, as has been proved by the athletic performances of their pupils; while what can be done with adequate coaching and training has been clearly demonstrated by the achievements of the Cambridge University men who have passed three or four years under the able instruction of Alec Nelson at Fenners.

We have had our failures and we have had our successes, but with each Olympiad we have improved, and I firmly believe that, thanks to encouragement and the new system of teaching which is gradually making headway in Great Britain, the team which will represent us at Amsterdam will be one of the finest, if not the best, that has had the privilege of upholding our national honour.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

By H. E. W. GAY

ILLUSTRATED BY W. BRYCE HAMILTON

late afternoon sun gave a semblance of beauty even to the dreary mud-flats that flanked the estuary at low water. It gave to the workaday grey of the cruiser just a hint of the glamour of gold. Aboard her the wind from the sea was murmuring among rigging and spars of a long companionship.

Lieutenant Commander Goring heard it as he strolled along the upper deck, and the sound brought a queer little smile to his lips. He glanced aloft at the long thin pennant streaming down, then gazed at the familiar

objects about the deck.

"Paying off," he murmured, as though in

answer to the voice of the wind.

One got queerly fond of a ship after such a long spell of foreign service as he'd put infond enough anyway to feel a little sad when one bade farewell. Of course, one always felt that way-for awhile-until the next ship came with her claim on one's service. Unlike, Goring mused, giving your whole heart to a woman.

The grey eyes clouded. They seemed to be looking far beyond the six-inch gun on which they were fixed. Then abruptly he squared his shoulders and continued his stroll.

He bent to examine the lashing of a guncover, fingering the strands with that close attention to detail which is imperative to the calling of the sea.

"H-m. It'll be carrying away," he said. "So will you, my boy," chimed in a voice immediately behind him, "if you don't knock off work for a few days. You're overdoing it, you know."

Goring straightened himself, and turned to look into a tanned face, wearing a broad smile topped by a gold-laurelled peak hat.

"You're overdoing it, Goring. Yes, I know you'll tell me that Jimmy the One has to work twenty-four hours a day to keep a

ship up to Admiral's inspection standards. But, hang it—all work and no play you know—h-m "—the skipper looked more closely into the other's face-" a mere boy of thirty-five oughtn't to look so fine-drawn."

"But I assure you, sir-" began Goring. "You can't. Come along to my cabin. I've got a bottle of pre-war stuff to crack with you."

There was an officer of about Goring's age in the cabin. The skipper introduced them.

"You're going to take some leave, Goring," he announced, plying a vigorous corkscrew. "Robinson here will do what little has to be done before we hand the old ship over to the dockyard authorities. I'm killing two birds with one stone. You'll look decidedly less hipped after a few days' holiday, and Robinson will be the better for doing a bit after slacking in the depôt. Splendid idea, don't you think?"

"' What a good little boy am I,' " quoted Goring with one of his slow smiles.

"You allow me no virtues, sir," observed

Robinson with mock humility.

"Another glass apiece, you fellows," suggested the skipper. "Then ashore you go, Goring. And don't let me catch you back again inside fourteen days. Here's my card. You can take my car from the garage. Go and enjoy yourself. And I don't want you. Robinson, before to-morrow morning, so you can push off for a few hours with him if you like.'

"We'll do a show, Robinson," Goring suggested. And turning to the skipper: "Thanks awfully, sir, for the offer of your

"Not a bit, my boy."

When they were out of hearing, the skipper remarked to himself:

"Good fellow, Goring. I wonder what's wrong with him. It isn't drink, it isn't

money. And as there's only one other thing left, it must be a woman."

With which bit of shrewd reasoning, he turned to a pile of forms on his cabin table.

A pair of naval officers were threading their way theatrewards along the main thoroughfare of the big dockyard town.

"I suppose," Robinson asked his companion, bringing the conversation back to "shop," "you aren't related to the Goring who was blown up on the Nereid?"

"I didn't know there was a fellow of my name on the Nereid. How queer! You know, I was ordered to join her just as I left hospital down at Exmere.—You remember the show they stuck up as a temporary base against Hun submarines.—But when I got to the Nereid's base, I found she'd had a sudden call to sea, and another fellow had gone in my place. I was then packed off to the Vivid, who blundered her nose on to a mine, and landed me in for a couple of days floating in the Baltic, to be followed by rescue and detention as a prisoner of war."

"Nasty shock for anyone attached to you, getting hold of the casualty list and jumping to conclusions over names," remarked

Robinson.

"Yes, but as I'm a cove on my own—my people died when I was a youngster—I don't think anyone got a shock."

"Not even a war-time girl?" laughed

Robinson.

"Not even a war-time girl," answered Goring with an enigmatical smile.

"I notice Madame Butterfly is running at

the Royal. Will that suit you?"

"Very well," was Goring's reply. "I knew a girl who used to sing bits out of Madame Butterfly to the fellows in hospital. A girl of about nineteen. Had a glorious voice.—Do you remember where in Madame Butterfly Cho Cho San sings to her lover as he disappears over the hill?"

"Too sad. I like songs about lovers approaching," professed Robinson gaily.

Goring was feeling rather out of things. Time was when he could have recognised familiar faces in the stalls. Someone would have given him a smile of recognition. Now, as he looked round, he could not spot a soul he knew. The same with the artistes. The programme hadn't a familiar name. He'd got out of things what with the war and foreign service, and ploughing a lonely furrow to—to keep himself from remembering things that might have been. He began to wish he hadn't come. It was queer, too,

how a bit here and there from an overture could stir heart-strings that time and work had almost muffled.

The curtain was up. Robinson's glasses were pressed into action. Very soon both orchestra and company showed they were capable of doing justice to a fine piece of work. Goring began to feel less in the cold. The appreciative and artistic lover of opera awoke in him.

"What do you think of our new star, eh, Goring? Wants a bit of doing to make a

success of opera these days?"

"Who is she?"

"Not the faintest," responded Robinson. "Coralie Maine is her stage name. I believe she came from abroad quite recently. What do you think of her?"

"I've only known one girl who could sing

like her."

"That war-time girl?" inquired Robinson with a chuckle.

But Goring had not heard him. His eyes were fixed on the slim figure of Cho Cho San. The house was wrapped in that pregnant silence which is the tribute of an audience to an artiste who holds them. Coralie Maine was for the magic moment Cho Cho San. Her voice was the voice of the Japanese girl singing plaintively to the lover who was leaving her for ever.

Goring watched every gesture, listened eagerly to every intonation of the voice. And the past came rushing upon him, flooding him with a wonder which merged rapidly into an ecstasy of conviction.

"Your glasses, Robinson!"—He almost snatched them in his excitement.—"It must be!" he whispered, unconscious of several pairs of eyes upon him. "No two girls

could ever-"

The glasses were focussed. His gaze dwelt on the subtle gestures, the play of expression—despite the carmined lips and pencilled eyebrows—which he remembered so well. All the disguising artifices of the stage seemed to melt before his eyes. And a girl was revealed in the place of Cho Cho San—a girl seen among the crude stage properties of a hospital concert, who had kissed him with passionate lips before the brutal exigencies of the war had flung him from her. Not Coralie Maine whom people hailed as a star. But just Joan—whom he loved.

His first impulse was to shout to her. The audience for the moment mattered not at all. He wanted to shatter the spell that held them, to unmask Cho Cho San and



Coralie Maine, and tell the living girl that he —the man who loved her—had found her again.

But Robinson's whispered "What's bitten you, man?" reminded him of realities. One could not vell "Hello, Joan!" from the stalls. It would deservedly be treated as an exhibition of appallingly bad manners. Besides, he'd be chucked out.

of the stage. Perhaps he would be able to get near

enough for her to recognise him. The thought made his blood leap faster. He tasted the imaginative thrill of her cry of delight. He would stretch his arms to her, ignoring the crowd, and she would come, her eyes wonderful, between laughter and tears.

But when he arrived at the stage door his romantic enthusiasm died. The waiting crowd and her luxurious car were barriers set up by time and success. It might be



"Goring, on the fringe of the crowd, gazed at her longingly."

that she had forgotten his very existence. He had striven, without success, during the nightmare time when he was a prisoner, and after the war, to find her. Perhaps he was a fool. A man could not stake out a life claim on a girl's heart because she had once yielded her lips to him. Probably she'd

been—just sorry. Girls were rather like that. And Joan was a kid then. Now—he looked at the throng—she could make her choice among the best. Goring's lips twisted in a wry smile. It was a bit cool for an undistinguished naval officer to look for his bride among the stars. . . .

An expectant murmur, rising to a tumult of acclamation, greeted the latest darling of the theatre. Goring, on the fringe of the crowd, gazed at her longingly. That touch of wistfulness about her beauty, accentuated by the glare of an electric light standard, caused a tightening of his heart. It was that elusive quality of hers that haunted his memory, making other women seem obvious and commonplace. Again came the surging desire to call to her. He wanted to fling from his heart, over the heads of the crowd, the words: "Joan, my darling! Can't you remember?"

But something forbade. Her face was tired and set. He could see, as she came nearer, that only her lips smiled. There was disillusionment haunting her expression. Perhaps, Goring thought, great artistes were inevitably like that. They poured their soul into their work, leaving themselves no capacity for happiness.

Then he noticed an immaculately dressed man, who seemed well known to Joan, bow elaborately as he handed her a huge bouquet. She took it with a slight intensification of the set smile, and stepped into her car.

of the set smile, and stepped into her car.
"That's Lord Edgton," Goring overheard
someone remark. "Didn't seem too bucked
about it, though, did she?"

"Why should she?" came the reply.

"She could have the pick of a dozen lords if she wanted 'em."

The naval officer stayed for a moment and watched her car out of sight.

"It's a good job I wasn't fool enough to speak," he muttered bitterly. "A pretty presumptuous sort of ass she'd have thought me!"

Then he squared his shoulders and made his way towards his hotel, wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had stayed aboard the cruiser.

All the complications in a sailor's life came of going ashore!

The prospect of fourteen days more, viewed from the first morning of leave, seemed particularly uninviting to Goring. The magic had gone out of it. He had lost the schoolboy thrill of planning to pack the maximum of fun with the minimum of sleep into every twenty-four hours of precious freedom. It wasn't freedom any longer. It was a forced abstention from the narcotic of work.

During the morning he took a stroll through the town. The sight of girls in silk stockings and hats close fitting over shingled heads accentuated his loneliness. Some of them, he reflected, would be the wives of fellows on the ships. There was young Ingleton, for instance, from the *Maori*, happy as a lark with his slip of a girl-wife, and their flat over the top of a multiple shop. As the youngster had put it to him, when twitting the bachelor with the easy assurance of a married lover, "There has never been so much romance one storey above so much butter since the world began, Goring."

sight of a poster advertising CORALIE MAINE—THE NEW STAR OF OPERA -set up a fresh train of thought. noticed the dates for which she was booked to appear, the 16th, 17th and 18th. To-day was the 17th. The 17th October seemed familiar to him somehow. What had happened on the 17th October? He had gone to hospital at Exmere during August. He had met Joan, of course. Then he had left on draft for- Why, it was on the 17th that the Nereid had been torpedoed! He remembered their getting the wireless news on his destroyer, and the skipper remarking what a bit of luck for him he hadn't joined her.

The thought of Exmere decided him. He would go down in the skipper's car and look round. It would be deserted, and the wind and the rain would have added to its desolation. But it would be good to see the spot once more. A sort of sentimental journey back into the past wasn't the best way of spending leave, but it was better than messing about merely killing time.

He got the little car from the garage and spun her out into the open country. The autumn air came keenly over wide stretches of heath and marsh. The car thrummed a deep diapason as it swallowed the miles. And the sound of it was in unison with Goring's mood.

He knew the road that wound through scattered villages so well. How many times had he not travelled it with a rollicking party of subs. in those days when forty-eight hours' respite from grime and stinging salt spray was like a peep into heaven! Great days they were! A flock of gulls, wind-swept, drove high over him. The harsh crawk of their voices came down to his ears. Wild devils! They made a man want to follow them—out over their tracts of restless ocean, back to the days when they were the only company a fellow had on lonely, anxious watches.

Came a rumble of wind through tall trees. It sounded like men shouting in the distance. Just the familiar noise that Goring had



"Not twenty feet away—on the spot where he had lain when wounded—stood a girl.

Her face was dead white."

known along this road. It grew louder, the noise of the car over the bumpy road mingling with it. The wind seemed to hail him—as they used to do.
"Ahoy, Goring! Your turn for sea

to-night. Ho, ho, cheerio!"

Under the impulse of the moment, he yelled back their badinage. But the sound of the wind in the trees had passed. And the voices were lost in the distance with it, as in the old times.

The road twisted sharply round the bottom

of a hill, revealing a grey inlet of the sea and a cluster of dilapidated buildings. Goring pulled up under the lee of a mass of timber and rusted corrugated iron, that looked as if it had been left in disgust by some demolition contractor.

Out in what was once the fairway a sullentide was swirling round the disused mooring buoys. No sign of life was there. The herons that now fished unmolested gazed into the muddy water at their feet, secure in their desolation. An anti-aircraft gun, clamped to a platform on the quayside, reared a rusty muzzle defiantly to the peaceful heavens.

Through the narrow "streets" between the huts and the store sheds Goring wandered. The place was peopled with ghosts. Doors creaked as he passed, as though the spirits of men who had once worked and laughed there were watching him. The bluff humour of the Service still lingered in the names and directions painted here and there for such as cared to bestow on them a glance and a grin.

A fairly large structure of corrugated iron stood at the end of the street. It was the old emergency hospital. As he approached he could hear the autumn wind whining through wrenched doors and broken windows. With a queer feeling about his throat, he mounted the steps that led to the entrance. The door was ajar. Unconsciously removing his cap, he stepped inside.

A mass of rubbish littered the floor—broken chairs, picture-frames, packing-cases. At the far end of the interior were the remains of the hospital stage. From a pole above, the curtain hung lopsidedly down, flapping monotonously in the wind. It was on that stage that Joan had woven a spell about his heart when she sang the song of Cho Cho San. He remembered the fullness of life in that moment when her eyes had sought his among all the fellows who sat round. And now, just the voice of the wind murmuring in a loneliness of broken things. . . .

It was eerie. It made him crave for someone to speak to. He resolved just to climb the rickety stairs to the place where his bed had been, take a last look from the windows over the empty fairway, and then get back. He'd go aboard again—tell the skipper he couldn't stick leave.

His ascent was drowned by the noise made by the wind. He stepped up swiftly, his eyes bent down, to prevent himself from stumbling over possible obstacles in the uncertain light. Arrived at the top, he stopped abruptly. His hands clenched, and a cold shudder moved up his back, pricking his skin to goose-flesh.

Not twenty feet away—on the spot where he had lain when wounded—stood a girl. Her face was dead white. She was still, to the point of being statuesque. In her hand was a bunch of flowers.

Her lips just perceptibly moved, but no sound came from them. Goring saw her sway slightly. In a moment he was over to her, catching her slim form in his outstretched arms.

"Joan—my darling!" His voice was strong and vibrant above the hollow wail of the wind.

She turned a pale face up to him. Something of the fear that was written there when he first came upon her still lingered in her eyes.

"I—I thought you were dead!" she managed to whisper at last in a strained voice. "I—I saw your name down among the missing when the *Nereid* was lost. And you—you didn't write to me. You didn't——" But her face crumpled up and her words were lost in sudden tears.

Goring smiled tenderly at the utter womanliness of the reproach.

"I didn't join the *Nereid*, dear. I went to another ship and was taken prisoner. And when at last I managed to persuade my guards to post my letters, I could get no reply from you."

"Because they wouldn't have reached me. I left the hospital. I couldn't stand it—after I heard. I—oh, I wandered everywhere twing to forest!"

where trying to forget!"

"And have you—forgotten?"

She glanced down at the bunch of flowers that had fallen at her feet.

"This is the first time my engagements have taken me near to this old place. I've been abroad until a few months ago. And I—I somehow had to come—to-day."

On a card tied to the flowers Goring saw the words "For Remembrance."

"But how did you get here?" he asked her suddenly.

"I came in my car, alone. Why?"

"Because you're not going back in it. You're going in mine. I—you see, I want to ask you—things."

"What things, Jack?"

And Goring looked into eyes where joy and mischief mingled in a mist of tears.



THE GLOBE-TROTTER.

"Haven't you one showing a little more detail? I want it for a walking tour."

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A SCREW LOOSE.

By Herbert Hamelin.

"THE lawn wants mowing badly," announced Lavender grimly.

I agreed hurriedly. "Mugglethorpe prefers to do it that way, though," I explained.

"Well, as he's on strike now," she retorted, "you can try to do it better yourself. Jump to it, my lad!"

I leapt to my feet with a joyous shout. "What a jolly idea," I cried. "I was just longing for a bit of exercise." Then I paused irresolutely and registered profound disgust.

"Oh! What a shame, Lavender!" I groaned in a terribly hollow voice. "I had quite forgotten. I—I'm afraid I can't do it to-day."

"Why not?" she asked in a nasty, suspicious manner.

"Dear old Spavins has borrowed the mower again," I explained. "Isn't it sickening?"

I have a pretty sound working agreement with old Spavins. Whichever instrument of torture

is likely to be called for in the home circle I send quietly round to him. It doesn't matter to the old boy—he's a bedridden invalid—his wife does all the gardening.

"Pity," sighed Lavender. "However, there's the roller, you can have some fine exercise with

that."

"Lavender," I groaned in a shocked sort of way. "I couldn't really; I mean to say, you must never roll grass when it is dry and hot like this. It makes one—the grass—positively wilt at the very idea."

Lavender said nothing, but went quietly indoors. I didn't like that at all. When Lavender isn't talking she is thinking—an even more dangerous habit—for me. I sat down to meditate quietly, but I didn't seem to have closed my eyes five little minutes when she was talking again.

"The mower is outside now," she beamed.

I just made a gapey face.

"I asked Mrs. Spavins to send it back" she explained gently.

Well, when a fellow has a nice, kind little wife like that he has to do something about it, so I scuttled off—and did it. I was back again quite soon, though.

"Lavender," I said sadly, "that's a rotten

mower."

"Why?" she queried. "Doesn't it run?"

"Run!" I tittered. "Oh yes, like eranything, but I want it to cut the grass. Come and look."

Hand in hand we walked into the garden.

"It would be all right," I explained, "if we wanted to give the grass a permanent wave, or even a shingle, and that Eton crop effect over

him to take the roller as well, but he wouldn't-mean old beast.

I was passing his place last evening and heard the merry skirl of the mower. I stuck my head over the wall.

"Ah! Running well, I see," I shouted.

"Rather," he bellowed. "Can't think why you sold it. Splendid machine; only wanted a new screw on the blade-adjuster thing. There was one missing, you know."

"Really?" I replied, and proceeded jauntily

down the road.

Round the corner I took something out of my pocket and regarded it fondly. It wasn't much



THE CULPRIT: We're awfully sorry, Mr. Jones, but it was really your fault. It wouldn't have gone in your cucumber-frame if it hadn't bounced off your face!

there"—I pointed to a large, bare patch—"isn't at all bad, but I don't call it mowing, do you?"

"N-no," she admitted.

"Tell you what," I suggested eagerly, "we'll give the thing to Spavins; save a lot of bother."

"Indeed, you'll do no such thing," she cried. "We'll advertise it."

I only got one application. A retired General, a new-comer to the neighbourhood, popped round.

"Runs well, eh?" he asked in a hearty roar.
"Oh yes," I replied. "It simply runs like—like—er—anything."

He gave me thirty shillings for it and I begged

of a little thing really—only just a poor, little missing screw.

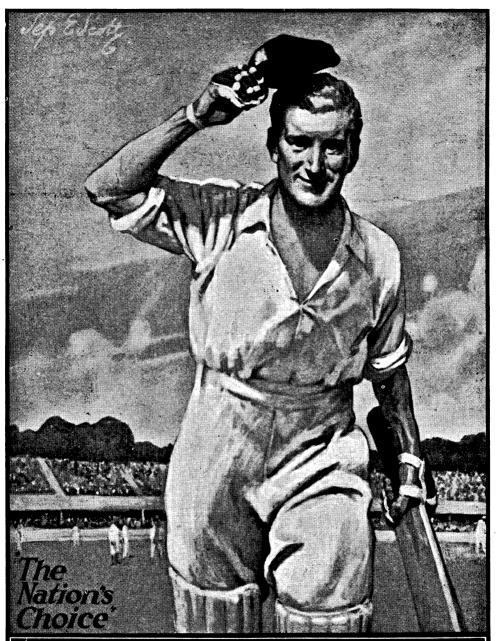


A SKULL three-quarters of an inch thick has been discovered in America. They are not sure whether it belongs to an early base-ball player or a primitive millionaire.



TIRED TIM: I heard there's a job going at the Lion Laundry down the road.

WEARY WILL: Can't say I'm very keen on washing lions.



PLAYER'S CIGARETTES



N. C.C.45



LOST MAN.

SCHOOL CAPTAIN (to opposing captain): You might get your grass cut by the next time we play here. My long field is entirely lost!



LUCKY THIRTEEN.

"It was a toss up whether I should play golf or go to the office to-day. "Ah, golf won, I suppose?"
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Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903. Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by the Canadian Magazine Post.

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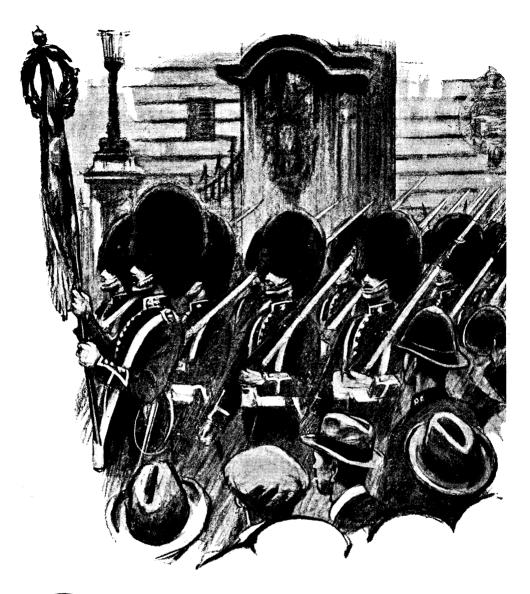
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Soldiers

CROWD had gathered around the railings of the forecourt of Buckingham Palace to watch the Irish Guards march away with their new colours. Scarnsfield, strangely thrilled and moved, stood between a shabby man with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks and a short, pale man with a black moustache.

Four after four of young soldiers in tall bearskins and scarlet tunics, dark blue trousers and white pipe-clayed equipment went by, rifles at the slope, bayonets fixed. The sentries at the gate presented arms. Officers gave the command: "Eyes right!" The steady tramp of feet almost deadened the sound of music from the band at the



M W. TOWNEND

"Scarnsfield, strangely thrilled and moved, stood between a shabby man with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks and a short, pale man with a black moustache."

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

head of the battalion and the throbbing drums.

The colours passed, borne by subalterns. Scarnsfield straightened up, stood even more stiffly to attention, and bared his head.

The last of the battalion swung by. In the rear the old colours were carried, cased. The crowd broke and scattered. "Those Micks are lucky," said the shabby

"How do you mean, lucky?" Scarnsfield asked.

"They never seen no fighting, they get their three meals a day, their quarters, their clothes; chaps like me, we fought in the War, now we can starve!" "Old soldier?"

"Two wounds, no pension, no job."

"What regiment?"

"Irish Guards: what you just seen, sir."

"Can't they do anything for you?"

"I wasn't a Regular. Joined for the War only."

"So did I!"

"Yes, sir, but you were an officer!"

Scarnsfield studied the man in silence. In his brown eyes there was the look one sees in the eyes of a hungry dog. He asked some questions, then thrust his hand into his pocket.

"Here's a shilling. My advice is, go to your old regiment. They'll help you, I'm

sure. Good luck, anyway."

"Good luck, sir, and thank you."

Scarnsfield walked slowly away, in the direction of St. James's Palace, pleased that he had been able to help even so slightly an old soldier, saddened to think that such a man should be destitute.

The shabby man with the sunken eyes and the pale man with the black moustache, old soldiers both, stood just inside the gate leading to the Green Park and talked.

"That bloke give me a bob," said the

shabby man.

"He give you a sight more," said his friend.

"He didn't. Cross me heart, he didn't."
"You ain't holding back on me, Spud,

are vou?"

"I ain't." The hollow-cheeked face broadened into a grin. "I said I was in the Irish Guards."

"Clever, ain't you? Last time it was the Guns! Spud, I got his wallet."

"Good-oh! How much?"

"Not a brown!"

Spud was annoyed. A lie was a lie; but this was just being a fool. He said:

"Hand over half, you, or I'll lay you out!"

A cold voice broke in on the conversation:

"You two, where did you get that wallet?"

"Me friend here picked it up," said Spud huskily.

The young man in the silk hat and morning coat and grey trousers and patent shoes nodded his head.

"You would say that, of course. I saw him pinch it just before the Irish Guards passed. Hand it over or I'll call that policeman." Scarnsfield turned slowly up Marlborough Gate toward Pall Mall.

How strange it was, how bitterly ironical, that whereas nine years before the shabby man with the sunken eyes had been valuable to his country now he had no value whatever.

Casually he glanced at a passing limousine in which a young, fair girl, extravagantly dressed and beautiful, laughed at her companion, a stoutish, dark man with gold-rimmed glasses and a grey moustache and two chins. There, Scarnsfield thought, went wealth incarnate: all the power and pride that wealth could give.

He did not envy them: the girl or the man. Could wealth bring happiness? Not while there were men like the shabby Irish

Guardsman starving.

A sharp pain in his right foot broke the thread of his contemplation. He balanced tentatively on his left foot; then, mindful of where he was, moved slowly on. The piece of cardboard he had put in his shoe to cover the hole in the sole must have shifted and he had trodden with all his weight on something hard and sharp.

Once more he was conscious of his troubles. It was no doubt admirable of him to have been overwhelmed with sympathy for a poor devil who had fought in the War and had neither hope nor money, but why had he given him his last shilling?

When he had stood outside the Palace railings he had been, in his mind, rich. The Guards, the music, the tramp of feet, had driven away all thought of fear and failure.

For a moment depression gripped him. He was ruined.

And then he remembered Crope, the American.

Imperceptibly his thoughts drifted away from the sunlight and freshness of the spring day, and the scarlet-coated sentries at the Palace and the police, away from the sombre present into the sombre past.

There was little shelter to be had from machine-gun fire and the shelling on the bare slopes south-east of Berzy-le-Sec.

Definitely the attack had failed. No one was sure what was happening. There were rumours that the Camerons had gone through and had captured the sugar factory and that the French had been held up on the left.

Crouching, half kneeling, half lying, in the long summer grass on a steep bank, with a broken thorn tree as cover, Scarnsfield gazed through his field-glasses toward the German position. One of the men near him muttered:

"Whit the de'il's this madman daein'?" Scarnsfield turned. For a moment he felt almost shocked. Through the great black clouds of smoke that drifted across his field of vision he saw a red-haired soldier, bareheaded, limping slowly toward them, carrying his rifle at the trail, the bayonet fixed, and glancing from left to right, as one lost.

He was very near the bank where Scarnsfield was crouching when a big shell burst so close to him that it seemed impossible he could escape annihilation.

Yet when the smoke cleared there he was, still standing, his hands to his face. Suddenly

he dropped to his knees.

Acting on some uncontrollable impulse, Scarnsfield ran to him. Above the roar of machine-gun fire there came out of the sky the screech of another huge shell, tearing down with incredible speed, growing louder and louder and more awe-inspiring. He flung the redheaded man to the ground roughly. A thunderclap of sound, as though the earth had split, deafened him. The acrid stench of high explosive filled his nostrils. He was blinded by black smoke. He could not think nor move nor see.

Aeons passed, the darkness faded, consciousness returned and the sense of death.

Scarnsfield scrambled to his feet, lifted the red-headed man, and tried to drag him toward the bank. A subaltern and a private took him from him and bore him to shelter.

It was only then that Scarnsfield discovered that the first two fingers of his right hand were pulped. Strangely, he felt little pain.

The red-headed soldier, though badly hurt, was conscious and able to talk. He was quite young, little more than a boy, lean, but broadshouldered, with dry blood caked all over his right cheek and down his neck and wet blood on his side and leg.

"What do you belong to?" Scarnsfield asked.

"First Division, sir."

"You're American, then. We relieved you people last night. What are you doing here?"

Apparently he had a difficulty in remember-

ing.

A shell burst on top of me. Seemed like

This dead. This it, anyway. A guy said I was dead. morning I opened my eyes and seen fellas in kilts and I asked what they were doing. They said they were waiting to attack. I guessed, having nothing particular on hand, I'd go along and see some of the scrap." In spite of the shelling and the roar of machine-guns his manner became confidential. "Fact is, I'm a replacement. I never been in battle

and I was kinda scairt how I'd make out. See! I thought if I went back and they found I was wounded some fella, playing at being an Army doctor, would send me down to the base, pronto!" He broke off, as though suddenly he had lost all interest in himself. "Are the Germans yonder?" He twisted about and looked toward the plateau visible in the distance to the right of Noyant.

"They're a sicht nearer than that," said a sergeant who was bandaging the boy's shoulder clumsily. "If ye'd gaun on anither fifty yards, doon the hill, mebbe ye'd have steppit on top of thon machine-gun that's rakin' us!"

"When do we go forward?" " Not yet," Scarnsfield said. "I'd like you

to give me your name and regiment."

The boy's face was a pale grey colour. His breathing was laboured. His eyes were glazing. "You'd like my name, hey! Well, gimme yours and I'll give you mine."

Puzzled, Scarnsfield told him. The boy

nodded sleepily.

"Major Scarnsfield, hey! Right! If you're ever in America after this li'l' ol' war is over, you ask for Crope. John S. Crope. Mebbe I'm not known all over America, yet, but I will be. John S. Crope, of Montana. But it'll be John S. Crope of New York one day. You come across to America, Major, and the country's yours. I don't forget, ever."

He rolled over on to his side and lay very still until later in a lull in the shelling two regimental stretcher-bearers were able to carry him back to the regimental aid post.

"Thon's a character," said the sergeant. "He's whit I wud ca' sufferin' frae delusions!"

But John S. Crope had suffered from no delusions, not even on the first day of Buzancy. He had written to Scarnsfield from hospital in England, repeating once more what he had said when lying wounded by the broken thorn-tree. He was grateful. He would never forget. If, at any time in the remote future, when men were not busy killing each other, there was anything that he, John S. Crope, could do for him, would he grant him the favour of asking?

Scarnsfield had written a brief reply from the trenches, in front of Loos once more, had thanked him for his letter and hoped his wound would soon heal. There the matter had ended.

And now Crope was in London.

In the eight and a half years that had passed since the Armistice he had amassed a fortune, estimated at about a million and a half—pounds, not dollars—and yet, apparently, he was a disappointed man. He had given his views freely to the reporters. The War had taught the world nothing. Mankind had deteriorated. Ideals had vanished. Standards all round were lowered. There was neither virtue nor honour left. Money ruled.

Scarnsfield had sent a letter to him, addressed to the Majestic, the hotel where

he was staying.

They had once met, he wrote, in strange circumstances. Might he have the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance? Although in the main he agreed with his views, as reported in the newspapers, mankind had deteriorated, yet in so far as the ex-Service men were concerned he was wrong.

He himself was proud to feel that he had kept his standards of honour as high now—in adversity—as before the War when things were prosperous. Perhaps when they met he would be able to persuade him that his

judgments were hasty.

Days had passed. Scarnsfield had had no reply. At first he had been bewildered, then hurt. Ought he to have mentioned where they had met and how, he wondered? But how was it that Crope had forgotten his name?

Finally he made up his mind to call at the Hotel Majestic and send up his card, with Berzy-le-Sec, July, 1918, written in one

corner.

And it was not only that he hoped, without actually daring to hope, that Crope would put in his way the opportunity to earn his living once more; he wished also to prove that soldiers were what he knew they were, the salt of the earth.

The only clean men left in an unclean world, thought Scarnsfield, walking slowly along Pall Mall toward Trafalgar Square,

were the men who had fought.

He realised then that someone was calling

"Major Scarnsfield? Just a moment, please!"

He turned swiftly. Hope died.

It was not Crope whom he saw before him, but a well-set-up, youngish man, with smooth cheeks and a fresh, open-air complexion and clear-cut features: dressed in a black morning coat and waistcoat, grey trousers, patent-leather shoes, white linen, wing collar and grey silk tie, grey suède gloves, and glossy silk hat.

Scarnsfield, suddenly conscious of his own shabby blue suit and shabby shoes and soft, shabby grey hat, frowned in the effort to fit a name to a face that seemed vaguely familiar.

"Don't you know me, Major Scarnsfield? Think!"

And suddenly out of the past there came the name:

"Spinner! It's not Spinner, is it?"

"It is, sir!"

"Spinner! After all these years! Is it possible?"

With nightfall the rain had ceased. Stars shone in the gaps between the scudding clouds. A cold wind, tainted with the smell of carrion,

blew from beyond Lens.

Scarnsfield, followed by the sergeant and Spinner, crawled through the gap in the wire, then made his way cautiously toward the German lines, crouching down and remaining motionless whenever Verey lights cast a momentary illumination over the wilderness between the trenches, mud and grass and shell-holes and dead men.

They were very near the spot at which he had aimed when a warning pressure on his arm made him halt. He glanced over his shoulder toward the sergeant, scarcely discernible against the blackness, and the soft squelch of heavy feet in wet mud reached his ears. He twisted about and waited, revolver raised, ready to shoot.

A German, a huge man, broad and tall, loomed out of the darkness, moving slowly, ten or a dozen yards distant.

He halted and stood motionless.

A Verey light shot up and flared its brilliance above them. Scarnsfield, still on one knee, ready to spring to his feet, saw Spinner's white face beside him, strained and fearful, heard a muttered "I'm done!" and dared not follow with his eyes the sound of footsteps receding into the distance.

Event followed event in swift succession. The German—he, too, had crouched as the light had dissolved the darkness—uttered a choking noise and sprang forward. The sergeant fired from his hip and he dropped. Another German who had crawled up, unobserved, fired at the sergeant, who grunted and rolled over. Scarnsfield, amazed at the clear working of his mind, shot at the flash, shot again. Other Germans were shooting. A bullet clinked against the rim of his helmet. Someone screamed in agony and chattered incoherently.

The blackness of the night was suddenly illumined by a cold glare of light. No Man's Land lay bare and empty, but for the dead. Spinner had gone, his nerve broken, as many

another man's had broken, after months of fighting.

"And it's really you, Spinner!" Scarnsfield said.

"It is, sir. I've been trying to find you for years, to tell you how much I owe you for all you did for me."

"Nonsense!" said Scarnsfield. "I wonder you recognised me. I'm grey-haired

now. I've changed."

"We've all changed in twelve years,"

sàid Spinner.

His smooth, pleasant face, still absurdly young-looking for a man of—how old?—twenty-nine, was flushed and eager.

Scarnsfield, studying him curiously, knew that he was sound. It was strange, he thought, but he respected him more because of his collapse in '16 than if he had gone through the whole War proof against fear. It seemed to place his courage at Loos and in the autumn of '15 before Hulluch on a higher plane.

"Oh, by the way," said Spinner, "your

wallet."

"My wallet!" Scarnsfield felt in his inside breast pocket. "I must have dropped it."

"That's what the man said who had it.

But he'd picked your pocket."

"How? When?"

"There were two men working as partners. You were talking to one after the Guards passed. I saw you give him some money."

"Spinner, that man fought in the Irish

Guards!"

"I can't help that, sir; he was a thief and a blackguard."

In his heart Scarnsfield knew that Spinner

was mistaken. He said:

"There are black sheep in the Army, Spinner, I know, just as there are everywhere, but I don't believe any man, however bad his previous character, could have fought, in the Infantry especially, and suffered as we suffered, and not gone straight afterwards!" He saw that Spinner still doubted him and was embarrassed. "You're looking very well, Spinner," he said.

"I am very well. I'm doing well, too. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Will you have lunch with me, Major Scarnsfield? I

wish you would."

"I'd be delighted," said Scarnsfield, and remembered with amazement that he had not eaten since the day before.

"Good!" said Spinner. "Any particular place you prefer?"

Scarnsfield's mind worked rapidly.

"What about the Majestic? Will that do?"

"Why not?" said Spinner. Then he added: "There's just one thing, Major Scarnsfield: would you mind very much if a lady—my fiancée, in fact—had lunch with us too?"

"Mind!" said Scarnsfield. "Good

Heavens, no!"

But his spirits sank.

They walked along Pall Mall, talking.

Scarnsfield was disappointed in Spinner's choice.

The girl was pretty, certainly; of middle height and fashionably thin: almost one might have said, two years ago, skinny; a blonde with cropped golden hair, and pink cheeks, and a fair, creamy skin, dark eyebrows and blue eyes that opened to their fullest extent in continual amazement, and pink lips—too pink—that were never for one instant in repose but were always either smiling or pouting. She wore a small black cloche hat, and a black georgette frock, trimmed with pale blue embroidery, fashionably short in the skirt; on her slender legs, revealed as far as the knee, were pale fawn silk stockings; her shoes were patent leather, with cut-steel buckles and preposterously high heels.

Though in appearance she was all that one could desire in a girl, there was in her quick sidelong glance, her sudden secretive smile, her air of innocence, something almost oppressive.

"Sybil," Spinner said, "you must persuade Major Scarnsfield to let us see more

of him!

"I can think of nothing more divine,"

said the girl.

Scarnsfield knew that she was insincere. "I'd ask you down to Hurlingham this afternoon, sir," said Spinner, "after I've changed out of this rig"—he grinned boyishly—"but we're motoring with friends."

"Dinner, Major Scarnsfield," said the

girl, "and a theatre afterwards!"

"You oughtn't to call me 'Major,'" said Scarnsfield. "I was only a Temporary. I'm plain Mister." He crumbled a piece of bread. "It's awfully good of you to ask me, but I'm afraid it's out of the question."

The girl pouted.

"He doesn't like us, Philip, I'm positive. Philip, you want one more for Ascot, don't you? Why not invite Major Scarnsfield—Mr. Scarnsfield, I mean: so sorry!"

Scarnsfield shook his head. He felt that the girl knew. She was quicker than Spinner. Spinner had seen nothing.

She said presently:

"Do you go abroad in the winter, Major Scarnsfield ?

"No," he said. "I don't."

"I should have thought anyone who could have afforded it would have escaped from the rain and fog!"

"Quite," said Scarnsfield. "But, you see, I can't afford it. Since the War, things

haven't been so prosperous!"

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Spinner. "You don't mean, though, that you're . . ." He broke off abruptly.

"Hard up!" said Scarnsfield. "Lord,

ves! That's nothing."

The girl's lips twitched in a little smile; her eyes were hidden by her long black

"I don't want to seem inquisitive," said Spinner, "but are you doing anything in

particular for a living?"

"Not at present. I've sold books on commission. I've collected debts, or tried to, and rents. I've canvassed for advertisements for a country newspaper. I've sold life insurance. And I've failed at every single thing I've attempted. I've advertised in the personal column in The Times: ex-officer, ready to do anything honest to earn a living, and so on, but nothing came of it. I've even applied for a post as junior master at a preparatory school, but I'm forty-eight; they said I was too old and too ignorant. My handwriting's been almost illegible ever since I had these fingers of mine smashed at Buzancy. So, you see, it's no use my talking about Ascot or Hurlingham."

"You have a pension?" said Spinner.

"Surely!"

"Commuted," said Scarnsfield. "I put the money from that and my gratuity into a partnership in a motor repair shop and garage. My partner bolted with the funds."

"Haven't you any friends?" said the

"They get me jobs—that's the right word, isn't it ?--and I don't keep them. The fact is, I can't help looking at things from the other man's point of view. I have an urge to point out the defects as well as the virtues of what I'm trying to sell. If I could close my eyes sometimes I'd be more successful. Or, as one of my many employers put it, when paying me off, I'd never get on in the world for the

reason I hadn't learned how to lie. compliment, in one way, though I didn't exactly think so at the time."

"You lied once," said Spinner in a low voice. "If you hadn't I mightn't be talking like this. You know what I mean, don't

you?"

The night had been black and the relief long and difficult. The battalion taking over the front line had arrived two hours late and the enemy had shelled the Divisional area heavily.

Now at nine o'clock on a wild March morn-

ing the men were exhausted.

They marched in silence, in the pouring rain, along the road from Mazingarbe to Nœux-les-Mines, their heads down, their shoulders bowed, as though their steel helmets and rifles and equipment were too great a burden; their overcoats were white with wet chalk; their kilts were drenched and heavy with water; their bare knees and puttees and boots were hidden under the thick mud.

A corporal in the Military Police and a bareheaded, muddy Highlander without either rifle or equipment, approached across a field.

" It's Spinner," said the Company Sergeant-Major. "Weel, they ha'e him!" His tone implied finality. Spinner's end.

Scarnsfield, shocked to the core of his being, told his senior subaltern to take charge of the company.

"I'll be along presently. Sergeant-Major, wait here!"

The corporal and Spinner reached the road. "Well, corporal," said Scarnsfield. "What

" A deserter, sir. I found him hiding at the back of that farm, sir, without his rifle."

Spinner, mud from the top of his fair hair to the soles of his heavy boots, shivered. Scarnsfield found it difficult to believe that this was the boy who had raced ahead toward the enemy's front line at Loos.

A staff car drew up and the A.P.M. climbed

out and said Good morning.

" Anything wrong, Major Scarnsfield?" Scarnsfield explained He ended: "This is one of my men. He's no more a deserter than I am.'

"Why wasn't he with the battalion in the

line, then?"

Scarnsfield thought quickly. Why wasn't Couldn't he say something? Did he

want Spinner shot?

"Two days ago I took this man, Spinner, and a sergeant out at night between the lines. We ran into an enemy patrol. The sergeant was killed. I might have been killed too, but

Spinner bayoneted one German and shot another. He fell and I thought he was wounded. When we got back to the trench I told him to go down to the regimental aid post. I didn't see him again."

Weak, but the best he could do on the spur

of the moment.

"They were shellin' Vendin Alley, sir," said the Sergeant-Major gruffly. "I tellt this man, Spinner, to gang roon' some ither way or wait. He lookit vera bad." Scarnsfield, aware that the Sergeant-Major was also lying, nodded. "I thout he wud drap."

"He never reached the M.O."

"I went on and on," said Spinner in a whisper. "It was dark. I went to sleep in an old trench. I don't remember any more. It was cold. I'm cold now. My feet are frozen."

"One of my best men," said Scarnsfield.

"He was with me on Hill Seventy."

The discussion ended by Spinner falling into the mud, unconscious.

"All right, Major Scarnsfield," said the A.P.M. "I think it's a case for hospital, not the guard-room. You'd better have him taken to the Field Ambulance dressing-station."

A lie, yes! reflected Scarnsfield. He had told a lie and Spinner had been saved and was sitting in the dining-room of the Hotel Majestic, talking in his suave, pleasant voice as though he had never been drenched to the skin and hungry and muddy and afraid in all his life.

"Major Scarnsfield," he said. "I think I can put something your way that would be worth your while. It would be a privilege. I'm well off." He laughed awkwardly. "No merit of my own. I had a rich father and mother."

"Let's go into the lounge and have our

coffee," said the girl suddenly.

As they moved in single file away from the table, Scarnsfield caught sight of a cleanshaven, red-headed man, seated by himself in a corner, watching them, smiling cynically.

Scarnsfield glanced at him, glanced away, glanced back. His heart gave an upward leap and sank. Despair swept over him. Crope, who had said he could never forget, had forgotten. He had gazed at him blankly, without recognition, his eyes hard and contemptuous.

But suppose, Scarnsfield thought, seating himself on a wide sofa by the girl's side—
suppose Crope had not forgotten! Suppose he had read what was at the back of his

letter and knew that he was hoping to get something out of him—occupation, employment, a possible means of earning a living!

He began to talk quickly, to hide his

hame.

"It's a strange coincidence"—but it was no coincidence; had he not known Crope was staying at the Majestic?—"but I've just seen a man I met in France, an American. He's forgotten me, but we came across each other the day the Division took over from the American First Division opposite Buzancy, July eighteen. He wasn't much more than a boy: one of the finest I ever met; and he came walking into the firing line, under shell-fire, wounded, and saying he wanted to see some of the scrap. I wrote to him the other day, but he never answered my letter."

He was going on to describe the fight near Berzy-le-Sec and what had happened to Crope when he noticed a curious change in Spinner. He looked just as he had looked that day in the rain when the red cap had him in charge and he had lied to save him.

"They were shelling us," he said lamely. And then he saw Crope slowly approaching.

To his amazement, it was Spinner Crope spoke to, not himself.

"Didn't see me just now, did you?" he said. "Is it to be the police, or what?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" said Spinner. "Who are you?" He rose to his feet and thrust his hands into his trouser pockets. "I don't understand."

Crope's lean face twisted into a grin. "So that's your line, is it? Spinner,

you're clever. I've been saying so to myself ever since you went off with that thousand guineas of mine! You thought I was sailing to America last Saturday, didn't you? You were wrong. After I learned how you'd swindled me, I changed my mind without cancelling my passage. The papers said that I'd left England. And now, what about a little visit with me at Scotland Yard?"

"Hadn't you better explain?" said the girl.

Crope bowed to her, ironically.

"You bet I'll explain. This young man cheated me out of a thousand guineas. The day before I was due to sail he sold me a painting by Lely: the portrait of one of my ancestors who settled in Kentucky. Though the picture was his—his father had bought it at some sale, he said—would I, for family reasons, mind keeping the trans-

action secret till I reached New York? Clever, wasn't it? He cashed my cheque at my bank into hundred-pound notes. I was with him when he did it. We spent the rest of the afternoon together, running around in his car, had dinner, and said goodbye.) Hour or so later, as I was having the picture repacked upstairs, an old friend of mine called. He saw it and asked what it When he heard he told me I'd been The picture I'd bought was a copy by some modern: worth at the most about fifty pounds. I'd paid, as I said, a thousand guineas!" He looked at Spinner, standing in front of him, frowning in a puzzled way and biting his lip. "Anything to say before I send for the police ? "

"I never saw you before in my life," said

Spinner

"A lie, and a bad one. I suppose next you'll say you didn't spend all last Friday with me from breakfast to 9 p.m.!"

"Last Friday Mr. Spinner was with me in Sussex," said the girl. "If you telephone my fither and mother, they'll say the same thing. You're mixing him up with someone else."

"I'm sorry," said Crope, "but I've never forgotten a name or a face in my life."

Scarnsfield gazed at the carpet under his feet. Crope said he never forgot, but Crope had forgotten him. Had he changed so terribly in ten years that Crope should now regard him as a stranger? And his letter! Crope had forgotten his name, even. He had faded from his memory, completely!

"Because I'm like someone else you accuse me of being a thief," said Spinner. His voice was little louder than a whisper.

Scarnsfield raised his eyes. Spinner was white and angry. He seemed to be holding himself in check by an effort of will.

"Spinner," said Scarnsfield, "tell me

"Spinner," said Scarnsfield, "tell me the truth. Have you ever seen this gentleman before?"

"Never. I've never told you a lie yet.

I'm not going to begin now."

Yes, Scarnsfield reflected, Spinner had never told him a lie. Again his thoughts drifted.

In the pale glare of the Verey lights dead and wounded Highlanders were visible lying, on the steep chulk slope where they had fallen in the rush after the mine had exploded.

Scarnsfield crawled into a shell-hole. He had been stunned, he discovered, not wounded. He must work his way back to his own lines. Another rush must be organised. The far lip of the mine-crater must be carried and held or the Germans would have it.

A rifle cracked by his side. A man began to moan.

"Who is it?" said Scarnsfield.

A Verey light soaring into the calm June sky above his head revealed Spinner, white and ghastly, revealed, too, the wound in his forearm, the torn sleeve, the flow of blood.

"Spinner, you're wounded. I've got to get

you out of here as soon as possible."

Spinner's reply astounded him.

"I did run that night in March. You know I did."

Was Spinner, once more invisible, crazy?
"I've reached the limit. I can't stick it!
I can't. All this while I've been trying
to stop one. I couldn't. For months I've
prayed that some German might get me!"

Not even in a shell-hole between the lines, dying perhaps, should Spinner have said that!

"Some German has got you now, anyway,"

said Scarnsfield.

He was bandaging Spinner's arm clumsily. "Some German!" The boy's wild laugh, heard above the sharp crack of light shells exploding around the crater and the drone and crash of aerial torpedces and the splutter of machine-guns, was shrill and rasping. "Some German! I wish it was!"

"What do you mean?" said Scarnsfield. Horror gripped him. He remembered the rifleshot. Spinner had fired. At what? "Spinner, I'm going to ask you a question. How didyou get that wound? Don't lie to me!"

"I did it myself," said Spinner, moaning.
"Self-inflicted. I put a sandbag I was carrying to the crater against my arm and fired.
I had to. If I die, I die. If I get well, I go to prison. If they shoot me, I die. I'm out of this, whatever happens!"

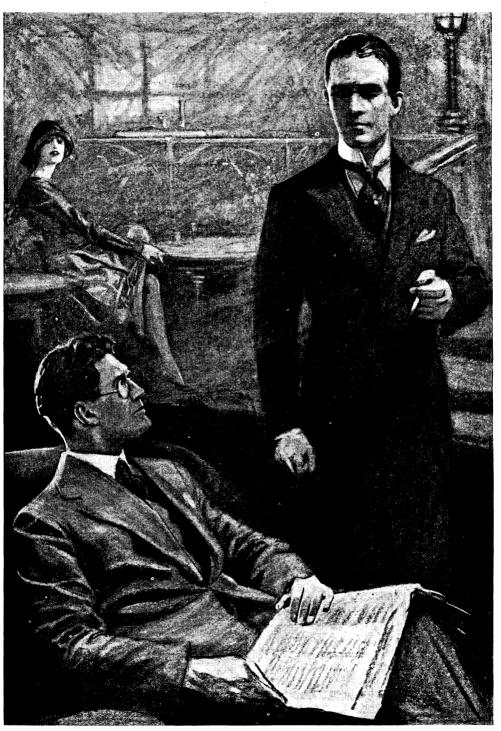
No one had ever suspected how Spinner had come by his wound. And how was it, Scarnsfield wondered, he had not reported him? In keeping his secret, he had done wrong. But, wrong or not, he did not care. Spinner had told the truth, and Spinner had been with him on Hill 70.

He said quietly, looking at Crope:

"Mr. Spinner is incapable not only of defrauding anyone of money, but of lying. It's a case of mistaken identity, I'm positive."

"And who are you?" said Crope rudely. "I was Mr. Spinner's company commander

for nearly twelve months, part of the time in some of the hardest fighting of the War. He went to France before he was eighteen, and there wasn't a braver man in the bat-



"'I'm through for keeps. Will you send for a policeman, or what?' Crope's face twisted into a puzzled frown. 'Sit down,' he said."

talion. If you want particulars about myself, I can put you in touch with men who know me!"

Crope frowned. Then he said:

"Very well. I take your word for it." He turned and walked slowly away.

Spinner dropped once more into his chair. His face was white and damp with beads of sweat, his eyes were hard, his lips were set

in a faint smile.

"Just as well I wasn't with you on Friday,
Philip," said the girl. "Thank you, Major

Scarnsfield. Good work!"
Spinner breathed a sigh.

"You would, Sybil, wouldn't you?"

"Have I said anything I shouldn't?

Why, surely . . ."

Scarnsfield saw her look of consternation. His heart was thudding and he felt rather sick.

"So you weren't in Sussex on Friday,

Spinner, after all?"

"No," said Spinner. "I wasn't."

"You told me a lie!"

"The first to you, sir."

"When did it all begin?"

"The year after the War. My case was like yours. My people lost all their money. I got mixed up with a bad crowd."

"You won't be hard on him?" said the girl. "He's going to run straight from now on, aren't you, Philip? You promised."

"Yes, I promised. I said I'd go straight.

I haven't yet."

"Spinner," said Scarnsfield, "do you mean to say you haven't enough strength of mind to do what's right? You were afraid, so you told me, at Loos and Hill Seventy, yet there wasn't another man in the battalion who fought more bravely that day or any of those other days that winter in the trenches in front of Hulluch. If I hadn't known what kind of man you were, do you think I'd have let you escape punishment?"

"Philip," said the girl, "why is he saying

tnat ?

"Spinner, you've robbed me of my faith—that's an absurd way of putting it, I dare say—you've proved it's possible for a soldier, a brave man—for you were brave, Spinner—to be a despicable scoundrel."

"From now on I'm going to run straight," said Spinner. "It's the truth." He glanced at the girl, as though appealing for her support. "There's just one other thing, Major Scarnsfield. You helped me when I didn't deserve to be helped. Let

me pay back my debt by helping you! I've got the money."

"No," said Scarnsfield. "I'm afraid

not."

"I don't get all my money by cheating," said Spinner.

But it was too late. His chance had gone. He was finished. Watching Scarnsfield's clean-shaven, fine-drawn face with the grave blue eyes and the stern lips, he knew that the one man in the world whose respect he desired had cast him off.

Scarnsfield rose to his feet.

"You've gone downhill, Spinner. You've

got to pull up."

He stood for a moment, looking at the girl, huddled on the sofa, pink-cheeked and wretched, her slim hands clasped about her silk-clad knees, and he wondered was this the girl to drag Spinner out of his trouble, or would she plunge him deeper into the mud?

"Major Scarnsfield," she said, "I'm sorry. I thought at first you were like all the rest of us: a grafter! Anything for

money, no matter what!"

"That's all right," said Scarnsfield. "No need to say any more. Well, I'd better be going home." He hesitated and said: "Spinner, you belonged to the finest battalion of the finest regiment in the Army. We never gave up while there was a chance, did we?"

He inclined his head in a bow to the girl and nodded to Spinner. Then he turned and made his way out of the lounge.

That he had no money to tip the boy who gave him his hat and stick mattered nothing. Spinner had lied to him.

He strolled out slowly into the sunshine.

Spinner, and the girl sat and eyed each other warily, almost as though they saw each other for the first time.

"Philip," she said, "I'm not much good, but he's taught me . . . we can't go on like we are . . . it isn't worth it. You're crooked, and I'm worse."

"You're not, Sybil," said Spinner. "Not by a million miles." He jumped up from his chair. "Do you mind waiting?"

He walked quickly across the lounge to the sofa where Crope, the red-headed American, sat smoking a cigar and reading a paper. He raised his eyes as he approached.

"I'd like to pay you back that thousand

guineas."

Crope dropped his paper.

"This a new line of approach?"

"I'm through for keeps. Will you send for a policeman, or what?"

Crope's face twisted into a puzzled frown.

"Sit down!" he said.

With a glance of apology across the lounge at Sybil, seated forlorn and limp, hugging her knees, Spinner obeyed.

"Why are you talking like this?" Crope

said.

"I'll tell you. I've made the one man in the world who had any respect for me despise me."

"Sad, ain't it? And who might he be?"

"That man who was with me a few minutes ago, my company commander in

France. He believed in me."

"The poor fish! I thought he was a partner of yours, same as the girl. And he believed in you, hey, because he was with you in France? I guess you were quite the hero out there, Spinner."

"I wasn't. I ran away and left him in No Man's Land. Yet when they found me hiding behind the lines, he saved me."

"What did he want to save you for?"

"Dunno. Thought I was worth saving,

I suppose."

"Beats anything, don't it? You ran away and because of that he has the gall to tell me you were incapable of taking money off me or telling a lie."

"It wasn't because of that," said Spinner.
"It was because"—he had to stop and think—"because, though I was scared stiff,

I didn't show it, not at first!"

"Most circumstantial," said Crope, "and convincing! Now, you'd better explain why this guy said you couldn't lie!"

Spinner stirred uneasily in his chair.

Then he whispered:

"I cracked. Couldn't stand any more. S.I.W."

"How's that? Translate." and

"Self-inflicted wound. I shot myself in the arm. He suspected something was wrong and asked me how I'd been wounded. I told him the truth. He never reported me. He wrote to me in hospital and said he respected me, in spite of everything, because he knew what I'd been through and I hadn't told him a lie. Far-fetched, eh? Well, it happened. That's the reason he backed me up when I said I'd never seen you before. After you'd gone, though, he found I'd been lying.

"I'm a crook, of course, and the sooner you call in the police the better. You can have the thousand guineas whenever you like. But, Crope, that man who told you

I was honest is the soundest man I know, and the bravest. And he doesn't know where his next meal is coming from. I offered him money. He turned me down. I was a thief and a liar. Worse, I'd robbed him of his faith, he said. He was the only man I ever met who came out of the War with the same ideals he had when he went in. He thought that any man who fought must be clean and decent, because of what he'd had to endure!"

Crope grunted.

"Say, any man who believes that bunk ought to be put away. The world's full of guys like you, Spinner; men who fought in the War and ever after have been on the prowl for some easy way of grafting a living without having to work. I've got a scrawl of a letter in my pocket right now from some cheap con man who can hardly write his own name, saying that soldiers are the salt of the earth: all that stuff! He's an exsoldier himself and he met me somewhere or other. Couldn't we meet again? Will I grant him an interview? Will I? If a guy comes to me with a yarn about being an exsoldier I tell him I'm an ex-soldier myself. I know what ex-soldiers are! Spinner. you're bone-lazy and unscrupulous. way I look at it, the War ruined you." Spinner, listening half-heartedly, nedded.

"The War ruined poor old Scarnsfield all

right, anyway."

"Scarnsfield!" Crope said. "Scarns-

field!"

"Queer, now I come to think of it," Spinner went on, "he told me he'd seen a man in the hotel here he'd met in the War: one day when our Division took over from an American Division at Buzancy, where the French put up the monument. This man, an American like you, came walking into the firing line, cool as you please. Scarnsfield admired him no end. He was disappointed he'd forgotten him. He said he'd written but had no answer."

Crope's cynical smile gave place to a

look of horror.

"Was that man who was with you Scarnsfield?" he said. "Lord Almighty! and I didn't know him!"

"He's changed," said Spinner. "Looks

twenty years older."

"I've been moving heaven and earth to find him. He wrote, did you say? Then it's his letter I've been carrying around the last three weeks! I couldn't read his signature."

"He lost two of his fingers at Buzancy."

"Sure he did, saving my life. Say, where is he?"

"He said he was going home, wherever that is."

Crope was on his feet.

"The address was about the only part of his letter I read. I'm going after him. Spinner, you're no good, you're worthless trash; but for Scarnsfield's sake and the sake of that fool girl of yours, come and see me to-night, both of you!"

Scarnsfield walked slowly across Trafalgar Square.

Things were bad. But were they worse

than they had been in France? Suppose when the enemy's shelling had held up the advance and it seemed impossible to push on another yard through the mud: would he have given up? Suppose he had? What then? Would giving up have helped?

He squared his shoulders and moved on

more quickly.

And then he became aware of someone shouting his name.

"Scarnsfield! Hey, Scarnsfield!"

Turning in mild surprise, he saw Crope, lean and fiery-headed, without a hat, pursuing him.

DOWN 'LONG IN DORSET GARDENS."

DOWN 'long in Dorset gardens
I 'lows 'tes cool and shady;
Laylocks, laburnems, crimson stocks,
And Eleven o'clock Lady!

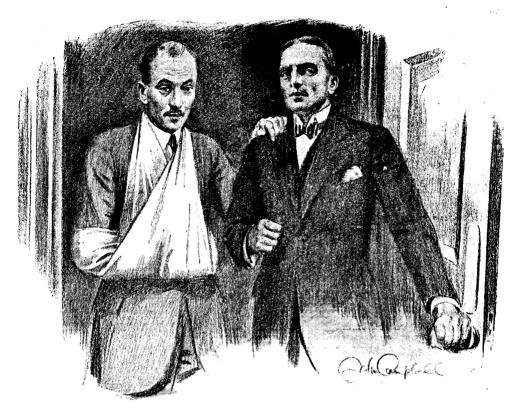
And 'twixt the box and the bean-rows
In thic garden o' mine
Look zee! The Granny Bonnets blows
Which zome calls Columbine!

Down 'long in Dorset gardens
Towards the hayen' weather,
Bachelor's Independence bells
Opens seven together! 2
'Twixt the Boy's Love and the blush rose,
And the golden honey ball flowers,
Blooms too they Bleeding Hearts, I knows,
In thic old garden of ours!

Down 'long in Dorset gardens,
I 'lows 'tes green and shady!
Laylocks and jilliflower stocks
And Eleven o'clock Lady!—
And 'twixt the box and the bean-rows,
The elder and the apple-trees,
Look zee! They dear lil' pansies blows
Which zome calls Heart's-ease!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

¹ Star of Bethlehem. § Clustered Campanula.



"And then Luker came in. He was pale and shaky, he carried his right arm in a sling, he stopped in the doorway and held by the shoulder of a man before him."

THE PINK MACAW

By H. C. BAILEY

■ ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL
■

HE Chief of the Criminal Investigation
Department laid down the report
and put up his eyeglass. "Yes,"
said Mr. Fortune, "speakin' scientifically,
she killed him. Speakin' legally, he died a
natural death. Speakin' morally, thank
God."

"Well"—Lomas drew a long breath—"it's as well as it is."

"Yes. I think so," Mr. Fortune smiled. "Who's the little sportsman with the soprano voice?"

The Hon. Sidney Lomas lay back in his chair. After years of collaboration he still

finds his scientific adviser rather casual, rather swift.

"Fellow in the waiting-room," Mr. Fortune explained. "Shrill and peevish."

"Really?" Lomas lita cigarette. "Feeling a bit above himself. He's Luker—Sam Luker—South American mines. He came round demanding to see me at once if not sooner. Without an appointment. I told Bell to sort him out."

"Not known to the police?"

"Not hitherto. Quite a respectable bounder. Rolling in money. Honest money, I'm told."

"Well, well," said Mr. Fortune.

"He seems to have taken your fancy,

Reginald."

"Rather a wild eye," Mr. Fortune murmured. And at this point Superintendent Bell came in. Mr. Fortune beamed upon him. "And what is our Mr. Luker's little trouble, Bell?"

Bell shrugged. "What you might call the usual, sir. He's had a letter. Threats of blackmail." He put a letter down on the table. It was written in a clerkly but shaky hand, and said:

SAM LUKER,-

There is a God after all. You got to pay. You got to pay.

"Posted in Liverpool," Lomas said.
"Cheap paper. Lodging-house pen and ink.
Does Luker know the hand?"

"Swears he never saw it before. But he's got the wind up. Says he never had anything like it before and he can't tell what it means."

"Yes. Did you believe him?" said Mr. Fortune.

"Well, sir, he's puzzled all right. It's something he never thought of, I'm sure."

"What does he want the police to do?"
Bell smiled. "Oh, the usual. I mean to say he doesn't know what he wants. He says his life is being threatened and it's outrageous blackmail and he ought to be protected—that sort of talk. I told him to send along any more letters that come and ring us up if anybody suspicious calls on him."

"Yes. Did that pacify him?" said Mr.

rortune

"He calmed down, sir. It does calm 'em,

you know, talkin' to the police."

"Yes. You are soothing." Mr. Fortune looked with mild, wondering eyes from Lomas to his superintendent. "I've noticed it myself."

"Well, I'm not losing any sleep over Mr. Luker," Lomas announced. "Were you taking me to lunch, Reginald? I thank

you."

In this way Mr. Fortune was introduced to the case of the pink macaw. He considers it a moral lesson on the futility of human effort.

It was some days afterwards that Lomas rang him up and asked him to come round to Luker's office. In a quiet by-way of Westminster there is a shapeless, gaudy building providing headquarters for many firms whose money is made elsewhere. Mr.

Luker occupied its first floor. Some of Mr., Luker's companies lived above. A small crowd was gazing at the outside of it with patient curiosity. A policeman in the doorway saluted Mr. Fortune. "The superintendent said to go up at once, sir."

Mr. Fortune went up. One detective handed him to another and he was brought to a large room in which Lomas and Bell murmured together above a man who lay on the floor. Below his eye there was a red hole.

"Well, well," Mr. Fortune murmured.
"In accordance with the terms of the notice

"What's that?" said Lomas sharply.

Mr. Fortune did not answer. He was kneeling by the body. It was some time before he rose. "Yes. Yes," he murmured. "And what did you bring me here for?"

"Quite clear, is it?"

"I'm only a surgeon, you know," said Mr. Fortune meekly. "I don't think that's what you want."

"To begin at the beginning-cause of

death, please."

"I should call that the end," Mr. Fortune murmured and contemplated the dead body. "Well, he was killed by a pistol bullet, probably two, fired into his face quite close. Just a little while ago."

"Any evidence of a struggle?"

"Clothes rather pulled about, aren't they? I don't think he's damaged otherwise. Was he like this when you found him?"

"He hasn't been moved since we came.

Nothing's been moved."

Mr. Fortune looked round the room. "Two chairs knocked over. Inkstand upset. Yes. Suggestion of violent action. Any other suggestions?"

"The suggestion is Luker shot him in self-defence," said Lomas. "What do you

say to that?"

"I wasn't here," said Mr. Fortune.

"Any objection?"

"No. No. It could be. Any evidence?"

"The evidence is what Luker says. What Luker's secretary says. And the letter. You remember the threatening letter?"

"Oh, yes. Yes. Exhibit one. Not any

more?"

"No, they haven't had any more. But this morning a man called and asked for Luker. And there he is." Lomas pointed at the body. "He wouldn't give his name. He said Luker would know him. They put him in the waiting-room and telephoned to us."

"Same like Bell told 'em to. Very respectable and correct. This is the secretary's

story?"

"Yes. The secretary so far. Well, instead of waiting, the fellow came creeping into Luker's room. Luker's story now. Luker says the man began talking wild about being sent by God, pulled out a knife and went for him. Luker got at a pistol. Says he's kept it by him since he was threatened. The secretary says he ran in, found the two struggling, saw the fellow slash at Luker and Luker shoot him. Then he rang us up again. Bell came along and here was the fellow dead and Luker bleeding with a slash down his right arm. We've had Luker and the secretary separately. They bear each other out. No discrepancies. Both quite straight."

"Everything nice and clear for the coroner. Verdict, justifiable homicide. You only want to identify the corpse. is he, Lomas? Did Mr. Luker happen to

mention that?"

"Luker says he doesn't know him from Adam."

"Well, well," said Mr. Fortune, and sat down on the edge of the desk and contemplated the dead face.

After some minutes, "You've got something on your mind, sir," said Superintendent

"Me?" Mr. Fortune turned to him with wondering eyes. "Oh, no. It's not a case for me. I was just thinking there's some work for the police."

" Meaning what exactly?"

"Well, what's the corpse got in his pockets?"

"Seven and six," Bell grinned.

- "Now that's very interesting," said Mr.
- "Shows he was hard up, sir? You mean he came to get money out of Luker?"

"It could be," said Mr. Fortune slowly. "But they don't say he asked for money."

And then Luker came in. He was pale and shaky, he carried his right arm in a sling, he stopped in the doorway and held by the shoulder of a man before him. "Ah, Mr. Lomas—I thought I'd better ask you—is there anything more you want? I'd like to go home. Your doctor has fixed me up, but this business has been rather a shock, you know. He says I'd better go to bed."

"Quite, quite," Lomas nodded. "You've

nothing more to tell us, have you?"

"You've got it all. All I know." Luker shook his head, looked at the dead man and shook his head again. "Mad, quite mad." He turned away.

The divisional surgeon came into the room. "It's shaken him up, Mr. Lomas.

You can't wonder."

"What's the wound like, Graves?" Mr. Fortune said.

"Oh, that's nothing. A cut down the right forearm and the back of the hand. Not worth stitching. It's the shock that knocked him over."

"Got the knife?" Mr. Fortune murmured.

"Here you are, sir." Bell opened a leather case. "We found it on the floor by the dead man. Nasty thing, eh?"

It was a long, thin blade set in a bone handle; it was double-edged and grooved at the tip. In the groove was a red clotted stain. Mr. Fortune frowned at it. "Yes. Quite nasty," he said. "And all deceased did with it was to scratch our Mr. Luker. Well, well. Where did the deceased keep

"Sheath in his hip pocket, sir."

"Is that so?" Mr. Fortune murmured. "Well, well. Sheath in his hip pocket. And seven and sixpence. Only that and nothing more." Again he sat on the table and contemplated the dead man.

"You're thinking something, sir?" Bell

ventured.

"Yes. Yes. Sorry to trouble you," Mr. Fortune murmured. He looked up. "I was thinking about the letter, Lomas old thing."

Lomas shrugged. "Not much of a clue

there."

"Not a clue, no. But curious and interestin' suggestions."

"It suggests this fellow's been in Liver-

pcol. Not much use in that."

"I wasn't thinkin' of the deceased. I was thinkin' of our Mr. Luker. Our Mr. Luker was very keen to get it on record that he was being threatened."

"Damme, he was scared white. He

was right too, wasn't he?"

"Yes, that is indicated. But why was he scared? He didn't know deceased from Adam. He said so."

"It's a queer business," Lomas agreed. "But this is all guessing. We've nothing to go on."

"Only seven and six and a sheath-knife."

He gazed gloomily at the dead man. "I'd better have a look at him. Perhaps he'll tell us something after all. Have him taken away, Bell."

While that slow, solemn business was doing, he wandered here and there about the room. When he was left alone with Lomas and Bell he went to the waste-paper basket and turned it out.

"My dear fellow!" Lomas laughed. "Do you think the corpse left his card

Mr. Fortune rose with a small crumpled pink sheet in his hand. He held it out to Lomas. It was an announcement of a cheap excursion from London to Yeovil. "You wouldn't think our Mr. Luker used excursion trains, would you?" he said.

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow!" Lomas protested. "I dare say his office

boy does."

Mr. Fortune put the pink paper away and sighed. "The office-boy wouldn't put his waste paper in the chairman's basket," he said mildly. "I'll have the knife too, please, Bell. Every little helps. Good-bye, Lomas. Think it over." He wandered out.

Lomas made an impatient noise. wish he wasn't so fond of thinking he can see through brick walls," he complained.

"It does make you feel uncomfortable,"

said Superintendent Bell.

The next day Mr. Fortune came again to Scotland Yard. He took one of Lomas's cigars, he fell into the easiest chair and through his smoke gazed at Lomas benignly but in silence.

"Oh Lord!" Lomas groaned. have it."

"A little peevish," Mr. Fortune reproached him. "A little flurried. Well, the deceased had on his chest a pink macaw."

"A what?" Lomas gasped.
"A macaw. Pink. In a pattern."

"You mean he was tattooed?"

"Yes. Yes. It didn't grow there. Very elaborate work. His back was much scarred. Not in a pattern. He had also suffered from malaria."

"Thank you. Very interesting. what am I supposed to do with it?"

"Think it over. I told you to think it over before."

"If I had anything to think about I

might."

"My Lomas!" Mr. Fortune sighed. "Oh, my Lomas! Lots of things. Seven and six, for instance. Only seven and six and the sheath of a knife. Very few men

go about the world with nothing in their pockets but some silver and a knife."

"I suppose the poor devil was broke." "Yes. It could be. But what was he? If he'd been a foreigner come ashore at Liverpool, he'd have a passport. If he was a British working man, he'd have a tradeunion card, an insurance card, something about his job or the dole. Whatever he was, he ought to carry some sort of papers. hadn't anything."

"It's queer, of course," Lomas said. "Does that surprise you? The whole thing is queer. We have to assume the fellow was crazy or it couldn't have happened. Why

expect him to be normal?"

"Oh, my aunt!" Mr. Fortune moaned. "If you would only think. That isn't an argument, that's going round in a circle. If it happened same like Luker says, the fellow was crazy. So because the fellow was crazy, it did happen like Luker says. And therefore he didn't have any papers, only a bill of excursions to Yeovil, and he threw that into the waste-paper basket before he went for Luker. Which proves he was crazy."

Lomas sat up. "We'll keep to evidence, please," he said sharply. "You've nothing to connect that excursion bill with the man."

"Only the little fact that you can't connect excursion trains with our Mr. Luker. I'm all for evidence myself. But you haven't got any, Lomas old thing."

"The statements of two witnesses."

"Of Mr. Luker, who has to explain why he killed the fellow, and of a man in Mr. Luker's pay. Not what you'd call unbiassed witnesses."

"We know Luker had been threatened." " Because he told us so. Yes, he was careful to get that on record first. But he didn't explain why he was afraid. The only evidence I believe is the dead man."

Lomas shrugged. "He hasn't told you

much."

"I wouldn't say that. First, he'd lived in a tropical climate a long time. Second, he'd been badly manhandled, probably flogged, more than once. Third, he'd been in South America."

"How the deuce can you tell?"
"The pink macaw. The tattooing is South American Indian work: the colour. the pattern, the bird. And the knife is South American too. So we've got this: deceased had lived among the natives in South America a long time and been illtreated there. And our Mr. Luker came out

of South America. The provisional hypothesis is that the deceased had something against Mr. Luker long ago, and when he could get away he came over to settle the account."

"That doesn't contradict Luker's story." "Not absolutely. No. But it makes our Mr. Luker look rather fishy. Very few men have a fellow out for their blood without knowing who he is or why he wants it. should say our Mr. Luker knew who was after him as soon as he got that letter and made up his mind what he was going to do about it. So he put the threat on record with the police and waited for his man with a pistol. When the man came he warned the police again and had him in and shot him one time. Then he emptied the man's pockets, cut his own arm with the man's knife and waited for you to come along and hear all about it."

"You're very ingenious, Reginald." Lomas lit a thoughtful cigarette. "Everything accounted for. Nice tidy case. No doubt that's how it ought to have happened. But you're only guessing. You can't prove

any of it."

Mr. Fortune opened large melancholy eyes. "No. I noticed that. It's not really a case for me. Why not do something yourself? Justify your existence, Lomas. Put a little work into it."

"My dear fellow, what is there to do? Take your pretty theory. Several little improbabilities. The dead man brought a knife with him. After all, it's much more likely he used it than that Luker faked a wound on himself. Take the excursion bill. If Luker turned out the dead man's pockets it's not likely he would leave anything he found lying about."

"Yes. It would be a mistake. But Luker was rather in a hurry. I should say he ran through the man's pockets, abolished anything which might be dangerous, thought the bill wasn't worth bothering about and threw it away."

"And the wound?"

"Oh, the wound. The wound was a mis-Think it over, Lomas. Luker's story is that a pretty powerful, desperate man goes for him with a deadly knife. And the only wound on Luker is a dainty little scratch down the right arm. Not what you'd call probable. No. Luker shot him at sight. Made sure of him with two shots. And then thought it'd look better if he had a wound to show himself. So he went and scratched his arm. His error. Not a plausible wound, Lomas old thing. Yes. His

error." He rose from his chair languidly and took another cigar.

"Any finger-prints on the knife?" said

Lomas.

"Ah, the great mind is not wholly inactive. Yes, there were prints, a blur of prints, more hands than one. But I can't find any that match the dead man's fingers."

" Of course, Luker might have handled it or any of Luker's people: quite natural."

"Yes, but nothing of the dead man's fingers. Not so natural."

"It is a queer business," Lomas agreed. "What do you want to do, Reginald?"

"I don't want to do anything," said Mr. Fortune. "It's not a case for me." He lay back in his chair and smoked with his eyes shut. "I suppose I ought to go to Yeovil. Let Bell take me down to Yeovil."

"Wild-goose chase, isn't it?" Lomas

shrugged.

"Yes. I think so. But we shan't know anything till we know who he was. And then we shan't know enough. He managed very well, our Mr. Luker. I wonder."

"What?"

Mr. Fortune opened his eyes. "Oh, just his little mistakes. Well, well. We ought

to try everything."

"I'll try the Liverpool end. Somebody on the South American boats might recognise the dead man's photograph. I'll see if I can hear anything of Luker's past. it's blind work, Reginald."

"Yes. Yes. Makes you feel very futile

and human, doesn't it?"

But he went to Yeovil with Superintendent Bell and there spent laborious days. The railway station could not remember anybody like the dead man's photograph on the excursion train or any other train. The police station knew nothing about him and had not heard of any stranger getting himself noticed and its mind was blank as to anyone from Yeovil having gone to South America.

Superintendent Bell shook a weary head. "I don't see us getting anywhere, Mr. Fortune. And if we did get somewhere, where are we? I mean to say, suppose he was seen in Yeovil, what about it? That don't tell us why he went to Luker. It's the kind

of case you can't get near."

"I wonder," Mr. Fortune murmured. "I wonder. Damn it, Bell, if he came to Yeovil he came to see somebody or some-And he'd been away a long time. He'd be asking where to find 'em. We want the fellow he talked to. Then we'd know what he was looking for. And when we know that, we may get at who he was"

"You're keen, sir," said Bell with respect.
"No. No. I don't like it. I feel useless.
But a man's been killed. We've got to

work."

They worked over Yeovil painfully, and at last Bell picked up the trail in a beerhouse. Its lady recognised the dead man's photograph. He had drunk a pot and said it was the old stuff. He had asked if she knew where Mrs. Dent was living now. She told him Widow Dent had been dead this ten year. And he had another pot and went away. She didn't know anything particular about Mrs. Dent. Widow woman who did washing and charring. Lived very poor. Had a daughter who went off somewhere before mother died. And Bell could find nobody else who knew more of them.

He told the tale to Mr. Fortune gloomily. "Seems like we weren't meant to clear up the case, sir. As soon as you get anything it turns to nothing in your hand. Makes you feel queer. I mean to say, it's as if we

weren't wanted somehow."

"I wonder," Mr. Fortune murmured. But he went to see the vicar of the parish. The vicar knew nothing of Mrs. Dent, who was before his time, but suggested his predecessor living in retirement at Salisbury. That aged man remembered her, he remembered her daughter, who married a country schoolmaster. Bayford was the name. Somewhere near Reading.

They found her. She was a placid, comfortable woman. She talked freely. She had never known her father but she had a photograph of him. In that faded picture of cheery youth could be traced a likeness to the gaunt, worn face that looked out from the photograph of the dead man. He had gone away from home when she was a baby and never came back. He was a sailor; he went on a voyage to South America, her mother said, and stayed there. For a time he sent letters and money—plenty of money. Then letters and money stopped without a word of warning. Her mother never knew what happened to him. She always believed he was dead. If it was really he who had been looking for them in Yeovil-and it did look like him-the daughter couldn't understand it at all.

"No. No. Nobody understands it, Mrs. Bayford," said Reggie Fortune, and with gentle tact told her of her father's death.

She was shocked. "But that's horrible." Her nice face looked disgust and

wonder. "Why did he? Why did it happen?" Why did it have to happen?"

"We don't know," Reggie said. "We

don't know anything."

"Coming back like this!" Mrs. Bayford gulped. "It's too cruel." She controlled herself. She made it plain that she was not going to cry. "What have I got to do?"...

When they had done with her, "That's a good plucked one, sir," said Bell with respect.
"Yes. Yes. Good blood in the Dent family." Mr. Fortune sighed and sank down

in his car. "Why did it have to happen?"

he murmured.

"Ah!" Bell shook his head. "We're no nearer that, sir. Maybe we aren't meant to know. Seems like asking why there's a devil."

Mr. Fortune looked at him. "Yes, I'm feeling feeble myself," he said.

Lomas was not. Lomas was in a dressinggown drinking Russian tea and chuckling over his last batch of eighteenth-century prints. "Hallo! Hallo! The wanderers return," he greeted them. "Had a good time? How's the country looking, Reginald?"

"We are not amused," said Reggie Fortune, and sat down. "Made anything of it, Lomas?"

"Ah, you've not quite forgotten the department. How kind of you. Yes, thanks. I think we've got it all clear."

Reggie gazed at him with round eyes. "The deuce you have," he said softly.

"We've identified the deceased. Photograph recognised in Liverpool. He's one Dent, James Dent, came over from Lima on the last Imperial boat. In the steerage. They thought him very queer on board. Not all there. That's good enough, what?"

"Oh, Peter!" said Reggie Fortune.

"What's it good for?"

"My dear fellow, it gives us a perfectly clear case for the inquest. We identify the dead man. We prove he came over poor from South America and was generally thought crazy. Well, that's a good enough explanation of a murderous attack on a South American millionaire."

"It's good enough for a jury, sir," said

Bell gloomily.

Lomas turned on him. "What's good enough for a jury is good enough for me, Bell."

"Oh, my aunt!" said Reggie Fortune.

"And what's worrying you fellows?"
Lomas frowned.

"We've got something too, sir," Bell said.
"We've found his daughter."

"Well, what does she know about it?"

"Nothing," said Reggie sharply. "Same like you, Lomas. We all know nothing. That's what I don't like."

"Hang it, Reginald, if you will try to see

through brick walls!"

"Yes. It is a brick wall. I didn't know you'd noticed that."

"Seems almost like God built it," said

Bell solemnly.

"Good Gad!" Lomas gasped. "What's the matter with you? What did you get

out of this daughter?"

"Outline history of James Dent," said "Very curious. She don't remember her father, but she has a photograph of him thirty years old. He was a jolly-looking fellow then. When she was a baby he went on a voyage to South America, bein' a sailor by trade. He stayed out there and wrote and sent money regular for awhile. Then the letters stopped suddenly and never another word. Daughter grew up, went away and married. Mrs. Dent died. And then after thirty years Dent blew in to Yeovil asking for his wife. That was last week. We've got the woman he spoke to. She told him Mrs. Dent was dead. And so Dent went to call on Luker and Luker shot him. Very odd chain of events. Lomas."

"What's worrying you?" Lomas said.

"It all fits. Dent was out in South America while Luker was making his fortune. Dent didn't make a fortune. Far otherwise. So he thought he had a grudge against Luker. Fellows do. He came back worn out and broke. He went to look for his wife and found she was dead. That sent him finally mad. He had to have Luker's blood and—

exit."

"Yes. Does that satisfy you?"

"Quite, thanks."

"Think it over. Several little difficulties. What happened to him all those years? Why did he never try for Luker's blood till now? He can't have seen the man for ages. If he was mad for Luker's blood, why did he go and look for his wife?"

"My dear fellow, I can't tell. You never

can tell in these madmen's cases."

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie Fortune sighed.

"Logic. By the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. The case is odd: therefore we assume the man was mad, and so it's quite natural the case should be odd."

"Quite. When I have a mad set of facts,

I assume the explanation is madness," said Lomas placidly. "What do you do, Fortune?"

"I don't know." Reggie gazed at him. "That's what worries me. I don't know."

"I thought so," Lomas smiled. "Well, I'll tell you what we're going to do. We'll identify Dent at the inquest. We'll produce the daughter and she'll tell her story. And Luker and his secretary will tell their story. And the verdict will be justifiable homicide. And that'll be the end of it all."

"Satisfied?" said Reggie.

"Quite, thanks. Everybody will be satisfied."

"Not Mrs. Bayford."

"Mrs. Bayford? Oh, Dent's daughter."
"Yes. She wants to know why it had to happen. Why did it have to happen, Lomas?"

"My dear Reginald!" Lomas laughed

impatiently. "I'm not providence."

"No. I had noticed that. Not a bit like it. But you might ask our Mr. Luker if he ever met Dent in South America."

"By all means. We'll ask him at the inquest. And he'll say he never saw Dent in his life. Good-bye. Must you go?"

Reggie Fortune went.

And the inquest proceeded as Lomas had foretold. A steward identified Dent and testified that he seemed queer in the head. The lady of the beerhouse identified him and declared that his manner was queer. Mrs. Bayford told of his going to South America and vanishing. Bell told of Luker's bringing the police a letter of threats. Luker's secretary, fluent and self-possessed, repeated his story. And Luker went into the box. He had his story exact and concise. He showed no sign of shock or fear.

"Cool hand, what?" a reporter mur-

mured

The coroner's questions did not disturb Mr. Luker. He answered with careless ease as if the affair had ceased to interest him. Yes, the man attacked him at once. Without a word? Oh, something was said, "I've got you now," or something like that. Mr. Luker could not be sure. The man was on him with the knife. He grabbed for his pistol and shot.

"Now, Mr. Luker, had you any knowledge

of this man?"

"I never saw him in my life?"

"You never met him in South America?"
Luker shook his head wearily. "Never heard his name before."

"You can't explain why he should attack

"No idea. Man must have been mad." The words dropped out slowly. The coroner coughed and looked at his papers and had nothing more to ask Mr. Luker. Luker bowed and in slow time left the box.

The divisional surgeon came into it. had found Dent dead and Mr. Luker bleeding. From a cut in the arm. Cause of Dent's death two pistol bullets in the brain. The injuries of both men might have been inflicted in a struggle as described by Mr. Luker.

And the coroner was not long in summing. up. The jury would probably be content with the evidence before them. If they were satisfied as to the facts, it was not necessary to inquire into the motives of the dead man. But they would probably be of opinion that he was not responsible for his actions. Men of wealth and position were unfortunately exposed to wild attacks from men of unstable mind.

Luker sat through it, limp and listless, the least attentive man in court. Mr. Fortune watched him with curious eyes.

And in five minutes the foreman of the jury announced that James Dent was shot by Mr. Luker in self-defence and Mr. Luker was quite justified. e e de la seusida d

Lomas looked at Reggie Fortune. You told me so," said Reggie dreamily. He was still watching Luker. When Luker, in no hurry, got up to go, he walked behind. Their slow progress was blocked by Mrs. Bayford. She had got hold of Superintendent Bell. She was releasing pent emotions. "It's real cruel, that's what it is. Losing him all these years and then to end so! There's no fairness nor justice in it. And to make him out mad! What do they know? Nice thing to say. None of 'em thinks about him. He don't have any rights. Not in this world." Bell got her out of the way. Bell tried to quiet her. She stared at Luker's yellow face. "Ah. There's another world, thank Heaven," she said.

Luker passed her by slowly without a sign. His long resplendent car was ready for him. He took his time about getting in.

"He don't worry," said Lomas. "Nice thick skin. Nice cold blood. Very comfortable temperament, Reginald."

Reggie Fortune did not answer. His round face had the questioning stare of a puzzled child.

Lomas laughed at him. "Sad, bad world, isn't it? You look about two, you know." "That's what I feel," said Reggie.

Two days afterwards that eminent physician, Sir Syme Sinkin, came to see Mr. Fortune. "It's a little unusual, Fortunebut you won't mind my asking you-I suppose you know all about this affair of Luker and the man he shot?"

Mr. Fortune opened round eyes. "What

everybody knows," he said.

"Quite. Quite. I'm not going to be indiscreet. But you went into the case, Lomas tells me."

"Yes. Speakin' professionally, there

wasn't a case."
"Quite so. The point is this. Luker's a patient of mine. He hasn't been well for several days. It is some feverish disorder which is affecting the nerve centres. can't define it. It seems to resemble the tropical diseases of the sleeping-sickness class. One of the trypanosome infections, you know. Luker hasn't been in the Tropics for years. Can you tell me if there is any possibility he was infected by this man who attacked him?"

Mr. Fortune lay back in his chair. "You're thinking of the knife?" he mur-

"Exactly. You examined the knife, of

course."

"Yes. Yes. Very curious knife. There was a groove at the tip and in the tip was a clot. Not Luker's blood. Solid matter. couldn't make anything of it. Some organic substance worked up with a little red ochre. It wasn't a poison. And I tried it for microorganisms and couldn't find anv."

You've no idea what the stuff was?" "Well, I should say it was some native magic to make the knife deadly. The knife was native."

"I see. But you found it quite innocent ? " ...

"There was nothing."

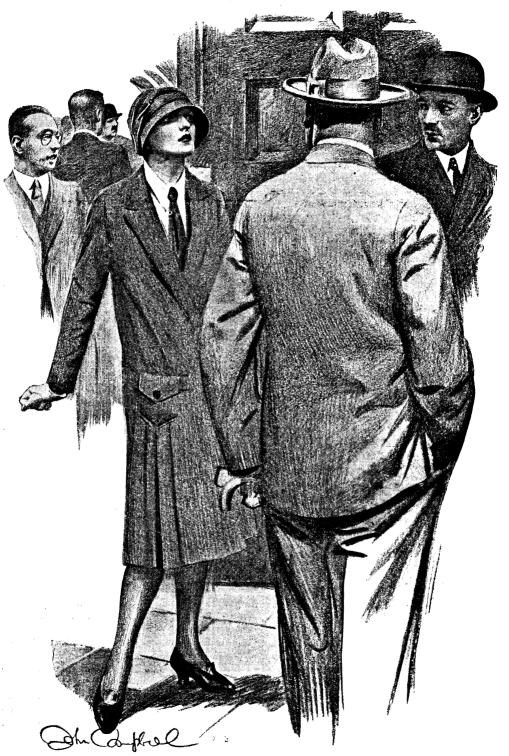
"We eliminate the knife, then," Sir Syme frowned. "The man couldn't have infected him?"

"The man was healthy. But what is the infection?" . . .

"I don't know. We've tested his blood and found nothing. Burke's seen himdoesn't recognise the disease—he can only say it resembles the trypanosome infections. I'm going to get Doran to look at him."

"Doran?"

"I mean Harvey Doran, the parasite expert. He's been out in South America doing some research."



"She stared at Luker's yellow face. 'Ah. There's another world, thank Heaven,' she said.

Luker passed her by slowly without a sign."

"Oh, yes. Yes. I should like to hear what he says," said Mr. Fortune.

"By all means," Sir Syme agreed heartily.

"It is an interesting case, isn't it?"

"Yes, I think so," said Mr. Fortune.

Some time after Bell came in for advice about the Archdeacon's Alsatian (you remember that sad story in the papers). But Mr. Fortune did not at first attend. "Something on your mind, sir?" Bell asked.

"No. Not exactly. Luker's ill."
"What's the matter with him?"

"His doctor don't know. I don't know. Some tropical disease that isn't in the books. But he's bad, quite bad."

Bell drew a long breath. "And nobody knows! Seems like the hand of God," he

said.

"I wonder," Mr. Fortune murmured.

The next day Sir Syme Sinkin telephoned to ask him to meet Doran in consultation. In Luker's gaudy library, Dr. Harvey Doran was an anomaly. He had the eager, intense face of a man who cared nothing for possessions but passionately for work. He was burnt brown and trained fine. He wore shapeless clothes and stood ungainly, but his hands were kept like a surgeon's and beautiful.

He cut introductions short. "You were in this case at the start, Mr. Fortune."

"Was I?" said Reggie quickly. "I don't know."

Doran's eyes, remarkable eyes, searched him. "I mean you saw Luker just after his set to with Dent. Did anything strike you?"

"I made nothing of it."

"Of the knife, you mean? Sinkin told me. I'm not asking about the knife. What did you think of Luker's condition?"

"Some symptoms of shock."

"Shock, yes. You saw him at the inquest, didn't you? What was he like?" "Quite calm. More than usual calm. I rather wondered."

"Listless, eh?"

"I thought he wasn't normal," said Reg-

gie carefully. "Not quite alive."

"That's what I wanted," Doran turned.
"It was on him then. I thought so. Well, we'd better see him."

Luker lay in bed with his eyes half closed. He recognised Sinkin without interest, without interest he accepted Doran. He answered questions languidly. They worked on him . . . Doran was thorough . . .

When he had finished, what he said was, "Is there anything on your mind, Mr. Luker?"

Luker opened yellow eyes. "Mind?" he repeated.

"In a case like yours, a man must have his mind at ease. Else he doesn't give himself a chance. No chance at all. If there's anything you want to put right—do it now." He looked long into the face on the pillow. "That's the only way for you," he said, and turned away.

When they were downstairs again Sir Syme Sinkin fixed Doran with a reproachful eye. "I'm afraid I didn't quite follow you. Were you warning him that he mustn't expect to live?".

"No. That would be your business, wouldn't it?" A smile passed across Doran's thin lips. "I know my place."

"Then do I understand that you think the cause of his condition is worry: some mental distress or anxiety?"

"Well, what is the cause?" said Doran.

"I can't say, as you know. I have never seen such a case before."

"I have. Among the natives in South America. Just the same symptoms. I couldn't discover the cause. I tested the blood for trypanosomes and so on and found nothing, just like you. But their own medicine men knew all about it. They said the sick man had done something dirty and the victim was afflicting him and if he made atonement he would recover. Sometimes he did. That's what I was suggesting to Luker."

"But, my dear sir," Sinkin cried, "this is mere superstition. It amounts to saying the man is bewitched."

"Not at all. It's only saying that something is preying on his nerves. You'll allow that a bad conscience can do that." Again a faint smile passed across Doran's face. "A fashionable physician must see plenty of cases. And something is playing the deuce with Luker's nerve centres. We don't know what it is. But if he has something on his mind he'd better get rid of it. That's what I said to him."

"I take your point," said Sinkin. "Yes, certainly, one doesn't want him to worry. But as to treatment—you have no suggestions?"

Doran shook his head. "You're doing all the right things. I never noticed that treatment made much difference in these cases. Let me know how it goes."

"Certainly. Certainly. I'm very much

obliged to you, my dear Doran."

Doran dismissed courtesies with a wave of the hand. Doran strode out. On the

doorstep Mr. Fortune caught him up to say, "My car's here. Can I drop you anywhere?"

"I'm going to St. Michael's." The car carried them off. "Did you want to tell me

something?" said Doran.

"No. No." Mr. Fortune smiled. only wanted to say you didn't believe all that."

"About Luker having something on his mind? I do. If he hasn't he ought to have. He's a millionaire."

"About a victim putting a spell on the man that damaged him."

"I said nothing about spells."

"No. You did leave a good deal vague."

"You've left a good deal vague yourself, Mr. Fortune."

"Yes. Yes. That is so. But I couldn't

help it."

Doran frowned at him. "You mean I know something. I think you know something too. You haven't made much of

"And you?" said Mr. Fortune meekly. The car stopped at St. Michael's Hospital. "I'm going up to the lab.," said Doran. "I'm busy just now. I'll look you up some time."

And again there was an interval of days before anybody brought the Luker case before Mr. Fortune. Then Sir Syme Sinkin telephoned that Luker was dead. That evening Dr. Doran called.

Mr. Fortune received him in the consulting room and said austerely: "Yes, I was expecting you. I thought you might have time

to talk it over now."

"That's it," Doran admitted. "I wanted to see how it worked out first." He frowned. "A queer business, Fortune. Well, you can have it all now. How much do you know?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Fortune.

Doran made an exclamation of disgust. "Don't waste time fencing. Let's have the facts out."

"I said I knew nothing," Mr. Fortune

repeated slowly.

"Somebody knew enough to look for Dent on the South American boats."

"Oh, that was easy. That was the pink

"You don't miss much. You dug up his daughter. That was more than he could." Doran seemed to retire into himself and reflect. "Poor devil!" he said, and then, "Well, Fortune, I noticed the coroner was told to ask Luker if he'd ever met Dent in South America. I take it you've a working theory of the business."

"No. No. Whenever I worked on any-

thing it broke down."

"You mean the knife? I've wondered about the knife myself."

"Is that so?" Mr. Fortune considered him with dreamy eyes. "Well, well."

"You didn't believe Luker, did you?"

"No. I didn't see my way to believe Luker. You know I don't see my way to believe vou."

Dr. Doran took that calmly. "You can. Luker did have something on his mind."

"Oh, yes. Yes. But it didn't infect him with that fever."

"It killed him, though," said Dr. Doran with a twist of his thin lips.

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow!"

Mr. Fortune sighed. "I'm not fighting you. There's nothing to fight about. You want to find out what happened and how it happened. So do I. We'll have to put our facts together. Now, about the knife-"

"I could make nothing of the stuff on the knife."

"I know, I know. Nobody could, if that's any comfort to you. I'm asking you about Luker's wound. He said Dent slashed him and he shot. You just told me you didn't believe him. What do you believe?"

"He said he didn't know Dent. I think he did. I think he shot Dent at sight and then cut himself with Dent's knife to provide evidence he was attacked."

Dr. Doran laughed. "Do you feel sure?" "Oh, yes. Yes. It was a most improbable wound. Nice and gentle."

"Gentle is good." Doran laughed again. "So he did it himself! That rounds it off

well. Clever fellow, Luker."

"I'm not much amused myself," said Mr. Fortune.

Doran's eyes had no laughter in them. "I haven't been," he said. "When you've got the facts, see what you think of it. In the beginning of this year I was up-country in Peru. I found what had been a white man living with a tribe of Indians. That was Dent. He hadn't much on but your pink macaw and that knife. He was something between a slave and a mascot for the They take strangers like that sometimes. I bought him from them. He said they'd had him so long he'd lost count of the years. He was a little queer but quite sane. He told me he'd been a sailor, left



his ship, set up a store, and made a bit of money. A prospector called Sam Luker came to his shop with a tale of a quicksilver mine up country. Luker offered him a halfshare if he'd join in a trek to try it out. Dent spent all he'd got on stores and cattle and they started. Then Dent woke up with a broken head to find himself in an Indian village. They told him that the white man had sold him to them. He kicked hard for a while. I suppose you saw how he'd been flogged? Then he settled down to it." Doran paused. "D'ye see him there? Blank years . . . Living, suffering and not alive . . . When I found him he had only two ideas in his head. To look for his wife and to look for Sam Luker. I sent him down to the coast and let him have some

money and told him to wait for me. I thought I might give him a hand with Mr. Luker. But when I got back to Lima he'd sailed. The next I heard of Dent was reading the report of the inquest on him. You know the rest?"

"Do I?" said Mr. Fortune. "He landed. He wrote to Luker to remind him there was a God. He went to Yeovil to look for his wife and found she was dead. He came back to have it out with Luker and Luker shot him. Yes. And then Luker falls sick of a tropical fever and you tell him it's his bad conscience. Yes. And then Luker dies. It's a kind of justice at last. But not what you'd call rational. What was Luker's disease, Doran? And what gave it him?"



"The Indians call it spirit sick. Luker gave it to himself."

"With the knife?" Mr. Fortune sat up.
"Yes, with the knife. That's why I
laughed, Fortune. The stuff on that knife

is the pounded body of a leech. The Indians use it as a poison. And it works out as the fever that killed Luker. Of course, the cause is some micro-organism in the leech, just as the other tropical fevers are conveyed

by the blood-sucking creatures. But I've never found the thing. It must be very small, like some of the others we can't get with the present methods."

"Yes. Yes." Mr. Fortune murmured.
"I've noticed we have our limitations. If our Mr. Luker hadn't been so clever and thought of wounding himself, there'd have been no punishment for Mr. Luker in this world." He looked sadly at Doran. "I don't know if that's amusing."

"There's some more humour in it," said Doran. "You thought I was playing the fool when I told him to clear his conscience. I meant him to do something for Dent's daughter. And he tried to. He sent her a cheque for five thousand pounds. It came back next day. She said she wouldn't take money from the man who killed her father. That finished him. He fell into coma and died." He paused. "I think that's all, isn't it? We've got it quite clear now."

"Clear?" said Mr. Fortune, a little shrill.
"Clear? Why did it happen? Why did

it all have to happen?"

And again Doran laughed. "Why is there disease?" he said.

NEXT MONTH—"THE HAZEL ICE."

was with an o

They were eating ices at a famous Continental resort.

That eminent expert of the Swiss police, Herr Stein, drank coffee and smoked a cigar. The white shoulder of the Jungfrau shone clear. The day was delectably hot, but something of the freshness of the high pastures was in the air.

"I want a hazel ice," said Reggie Fortune.

"My dear child!" Mrs. Fortune's charming hands went up. She counted on her

fingers.

"No. No. I've only had two. Peaches aren't an ice. And the others were only water ices. One of those nut things is clearly indicated." He looked firmly at his wife. "I do want a hazel ice, Joan."

Then Adrian Trove arrived, and Reggie found he was not destined to get his ice until his nimble brain had solved as intricate a puzzle of crime as any in his experience. A clever and thrilling story.

THE PARAGON.

H^E seemed to be a perfect don At golf, whom people looked upon As something of a paragon.

Exactly where each shoulder fits His jacket had the sort of slits Depicted in athletic kits.

His knickers neat, his figure slim, His air precise, his manner prim Denoted naught could flurry him.

His drive was always straight and fair, And his approaching, which is rare, Was deadly, always getting there.

And then he never, never swore, But, if his put had failed to score, Would merely mutter "What a bore!"

In short he was, I have to state,
And, mind, I don't exaggerate,
Unbearably immaculate!
The sort of man I simply hate!

JOHN R. WILSON.



"Madame Clémentine suggested that Hilary should join her in a dress-making business, which—though flourishing—stood in need of additional capital.

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE •

THE ADVENTURE OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS CELIBATE

By STEPHEN McKENNA

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

" NOTWITHSTANDING anything to the contrary contained in my Will I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my real and personal estate to such grandson of mine as shall be the first to marry within twelve calendar months from the date of this Codicil and shall within that period legally adopt the surname of Datchley and shall within six months of his marriage give an Undertaking to reside at Datchley Castle for not less than six calendar months in each year after my death. If there shall be no such grandson, then the provisions of my Will shall take effect."

Extract from the codicil to the last will and

testament of John Datchley.

T.

N the library of the Biological Institute in Bloomsbury Square, Hilary Fairfax, assistant-demonstrator, sat staring at a row of his own publications. The Health of the Nation was flanked on the one side by The Survival of the Unfittest and on the other by Quality? Or Quantity? In front of him lay an unfinished letter to which, at long intervals, he was painfully adding a phrase or two:

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"It is idle to declaim against a C 3 population in an A 1 country if we do nothing to improve the national stock . . . When we give to the breeding of healthy men and women a hundredth part of the care which we lavish on horses and cattle . . . The lead in this, however, must come from the educated classes, to whom it should be as great a sin for men and women to marry without a certificate of physical fitness as it is for the religious to marry without the blessing of their church . . ."

"A good phrase, that," Hilary murmured and noted it for his next pamphlet.

Then he laid down his pen and looked through begrimed windows at the blackened and blighted shrubs below him. Though the cause and the place to which he stood dedicated were of his own choosing, he had taken a sudden dislike for his work; and, though he had not repined hitherto at being included among the physically unfit who should be forbidden to marry, he was now embittered by the thought that, if he could marry within the next day or two, he might

become one of the richest men in England.

"I told Mr. Plimsoll, the solicitor," he continued, "that it was iniquitous for my grandfather to leave more than four million pounds to the grandson who marries first, without giving a thought to those who are prevented by their conscience from marrying. I don't want a penny for myself, but I will leave no stone unturned to secure a share of it for the work with which I have identified myself. The five thousand which the old man gave me before his death I must in common prudence keep against the day when my wretched health prevents me from working, but I cannot see why we should not agree amicably to pool, say, half the money . . ."

Suddenly wearying of his task, Hilary pocketed the unfinished letter and hurried to the museum in the hope of finding that Miss Dalmayne had not gone home.

"If any one can find a way out, it will be Margery," he reflected; "and it's easier to explain by word of mouth... With a hundred thousand I could set up an institute of my own."

Though he was still only in the middle twenties, Hilary had spent a third of his life in Bloomsbury. The son of a civil servant and himself designed for a Government office, he had quickly revealed that he would never pass the necessary examination; and Sir Clement Fairfax, who was suffering from gout when the last and worst of many bad school-reports arrived, vented his disappointment with his son and his

displeasure with the medical profession by decreeing that Hilary had better become a doctor. "It is all," said Sir Clement, "that he is fit for "; but the years succeeding established that the boy lacked even that blend of charlatanism and effrontery which his father deemed essential to success in medicine or surgery. Occupation, indeed, was found for Hilary as general drudge in a laboratory; and his wider ambitions found an outlet in the study of eugenics. As no one troubled to contradict his assertions or to check his activities, he quickly became a prolific pamphleteer; and his prestige among the laity not only consoled him for his failure in the more exact sciences, but on one occasion saved him from social disaster. When a student with whom he had entangled himself threatened an action for breach of promise, the champion of selective breeding was able to plead that he was at least suiting his practice to his precepts. "If," Hilary's solicitor was instructed to say, "you wish to marry a man with a history of diabetes in the family . . . "

Though the entanglement was by this time generally forgotten, Hilary had walked as circumspectly ever since as his temperament-and the reactions which it produced -would allow. Reviled at school and despised in hospital, he had regarded himself as predestined to failure until a lucky chance shewed him one field in which he could excel; and, until one pair of roving eyes looked favourably upon him, he had regarded himself as unworthy of a woman's notice. The success of Quality? Or Quantity? put him in good conceit with himself; and his single triumph in gallantry convinced him that, though he could not drink wine without getting a headache nor smoke cigars without feeling sick, he was no longer a man to be ignored. Circumspectly as he walked, Hilary did not fail to observe that, though a man might call him sickly, to a few women he was pallidly romantic. Living avowedly under sentence, he felt secure from a second entanglement; and, if he was still without honour among his own people, he enjoyed the respect and regard of a growing audience in Bloomsbury.

Of his recent disciples the most enthusiastic was Miss Margery Dalmayne. Hilary, meeting her on the morrow of something called a "disappointment", had won her sympathy by hinting that he too nursed a secret sorrow and her admiration by proclaiming that they could best forget themselves in working for others. Despite the

jeers of a lover, who charged her with hunting medical students in the hope of making him jealous, Margery had for three weeks toiled in Hilary's neighbourhood and under his admiring eye with a devotion which no scientist could consider scientific. At the end of three days she had possessed herself of his history and ambitions; at the end of six she was calling him by his Christian name and taking him under her protection. Men of learning, she asserted gaily, needed a woman of the world to look after them; and, as Hilary could not honestly maintain that he had always looked after himself satisfactorily, he went to her for advice. Her advice, moreover, was good. When he told her about the five thousand pounds which his grandfather had left him a few days before his death, Margery insisted that it should at once be invested: his health, she told him, might improve, he might want to marry. Their friendship, indeed, and her advent to Bloomsbury might be reckoned to date from their first discussion of private riches and the endowment of research.

"She'll know how I can make my cousins

see reason," Hilary told himself.

As Miss Dalmayne had left for the day, he added a postscript to his interrupted letter:

"I want to see you alone to ask a question which only you can answer . . ."

II.

MARGERY invited him to tea the following

"There will be no one here, except perhaps Billy," she explained. "As you'll certainly meet him sooner or later, I'll tell you the facts very shortly. We were engaged; but the engagement came to an end when he wanted me to go out to India (He's a soldier, you see). I don't know whether he thinks I shall change my mind, but I shan't. I have found my vocation in the work you and I are doing.

"You say you must see me alone, so come before the family rells up for tea. I can't imagine what it is that you want to discuss

with me so mysteriously!"

Though he timed himself to arrive at three, Hilary was delayed by a visit, equally unexpected and unwelcome, from the lady to whom he had been engaged three years By calling herself "Madame Clémentine", she disarmed the suspicions of the door-keeper; and, explaining that she had abandoned medicine for commerce, she suggested that Hilary should join her in a dress-making business, which—though flourishing-stood in need of additional capital. For a torturing moment Hilary fancied that matrimonial partnership would next be proposed; but, when he made clear, as was literally true, that his grandfather's death had not enriched him by a penny, omitting to mention the death-bed gift of five thousand pounds or to indicate the terms on which he could lay claim to the estate, "Clémentine" left him with a disturbing promise or threat that she would probably drop in on him again later.

"Which shews how careful you have to be," Hilary mused, mopping his brow, on the way to Hampstead. "If I do get a share, I shall have to keep quiet about it. Why the lawyer idiots didn't make her give up my letters when she withdrew her claim

I don't know."

His agitation, remaining with him until he reached the Dalmaynes' house, barred him from reflecting, at first sight of its forbidding front, that most girls would choose India or Tristan da Cunha in preference to Marigold Terrace; and he was still brooding over "Clémentine's" surprise attack when he entered the drawing-room to find that another visitor had been before him. evidence of the visit lay in Margery's hands and consisted of a broken-backed copy of Quality? Or Quantity? which she was mending with paste.

"Billy's footiwork," she explained. "He blew in to see if I'd 'come to my senses yet', so I asked if he could get himself certified as mentally fit to marry . . .

Cigarette?"

"You know I never take narcotics," Hilary answered reproachfully.

Margery secreted the cigarette which she had taken for herself.

"What is it you want to see me about?"

"The most serious decision of my life. I have told you how my grandfather quarrelled with all his relations. On his deathbed he seems to have discovered that he had not appointed any one to succeed him; and we are now informed that he has left everything to the one of us—his grandsons, I mean—who marries first . . . '

Margery clapped her hands, letting Quality? Or Quantity? fall unregretted to the floor:

"I was thrilled when I got your letter!" Hilary picked up the fallen book and pointed to the title:

"My views on the marriage of the unfit are well-known; but, though I may not be destined to carry on the family name, it's monstrous that I should be precluded from all share in money that would revolutionize the work which you and I are doing. With an institute of my own . . . If we could have only a hundred thousand each, that would still leave more than three millions for the winner!"

"Enough for most men," said Margery. "One of my cousins, Bryan Abbotsford,

refused point-blank to join the pool"

"Did he think it was a safe thing for

"If so, he's a bigger fool than I took him for. He may call himself engaged, but the girl's a ward in chancery. I don't know whether Bryan's waiting till she comes of age . . .''

Margery shook her head quickly:

"It's much more likely that they're married already. Would any man throw away the chance of getting a hundred thousand for nothing if he wasn't absolutely sure of getting very much more for less than nothing?"

Hilary looked up quickly, then turned

to hide his utter dismay.

"That that had not occurred to me," he stammered at last. "No tea, thank you."

"A whiskey-and-soda?"

"Thanks, I never touch stimulants. But, Margery, it's a serious offence to elope with a ward in chancery . . ."

"You can very soon prove whether I'm right," the girl replied. "Tell him that you're thinking of getting married yourself."

"He'd know it wasn't true."

"Then make it true. When he hears you're engaged, he'll join the pool quickly enough. Or, if he's married and wants to keep it dark for the present, he'll pay you to keep your mouth shut. Either way you're in clover!"

She stood up to blow out the spirit-lamp. Then, instead of returning to her place, she sat down on the arm of his chair and extracted Quality? Or Quantity? from his

fidgetting hands.

Hilary's mind went back to his late interview with "Clémentine"; and he

shook his head.

"Even to pretend I contemplated being untrue to everything I've said . . . ," he began with a fair assumption of righteous heat.

"When you wrote this book, you never thought that marrying would make a millionaire of you!" said Margery with disconcertingly feminine directness.

"And you think that all I believe, all I've taught is to be sold?"

His indignation failed even to warm

Margery's cheeks to a passing flush.

"I assume," she replied calmly, "that you were sincere when you talked of a C 3 population in an A 1 country? When you think what we can do for research . . ." She scrambled impatiently off the arm of the chair as a maid came in with a whispered message. "Say I'm engaged!" she snapped. Then, following Hilary, who had drifted to the window, she laid her hands on his shoulders with a gesture of entreaty. Hilary, I can't understand how you hesitate for a moment!"

"If you were in my place . . ."
Margery turned her head at the sound of raised voices in the hall. As they died away, she turned again to Hilary with a smile that caused his grip on Quality? Or

Quantity? to tighten:

"My position is curiously like yours: I said I should never marry, I told Billy that only this afternoon. If I thought, though, that, by putting my love for consistency higher than my care for the health and happiness of millions, I was going to throw away such an opportunity for doing good as will never come again, I should marry without a moment's delay. Is that definite enough?"

"You've certainly the courage of your

convictions," Hilary muttered.

The girl stepped back and looked at him in amazement:

"But . . . isn't that the answer you wanted? Hilary . . . Hilary, when you said you must see me alone . . . The question you were going to ask me which I alone could answer . . . When you talked about marriage and set me to find you a way out of your difficulties . . You were in earnest? Or weren't you? I I thought this was a trick on me . . . "

The end of her sentence became confused with the tread of weighty feet. The door was flung open and slammed to. A towering figure advanced into the room, only halting at sight of a shrinking, embarrassed youth with ink-stained fingers and acidburnt clothes.

"Who's been playing tricks on whom ?"

demanded the new-comer.

This, Hilary decided, must be Billy, a man heretofore regarded with distaste as one of the beef-and-beer school who would consider him less romantic than unhealthy, now welcomed—as even "Clémentine

would have been welcomed—as a diversion.

"I said I was engaged," Margery informed

her persistent suitor with icy disdain.
"So your maid told me. 'I know that,' I said. 'She's engaged to me.' So I just walked in."

"And now, Billy, you can just walk out again. Mr. Fairfax asked to see me alone. When I said I was engaged . . . Oh, can't you understand?"

" Understand what?" roared "That you and this fellow . . . ? It's a

lie! Confess it's a lie, sir!"

"I . . . I " stammered Hilary.

"Control yourself, Billy," begged Margery.
"I...I...," Hilary began again.

The stammer ended in a choke as Billy's powerful hands fell on the assistant-demonstrator's sloping shoulders.

"Is this true?" he shouted. "She's

accepted you?"

"It's quite true, Billy," replied Margery with dignity.

"Let him answer for himself!"

"Take . . . thumb . . . windpipe . . .!" Hilary gasped, his face turning the colour of a ripe mulberry.

"Answer my question; and I'll let you

Was this a trick?"

"Shouldn't dream . . . tricks . . . that kind!" Hilary spluttered. "If . . . let . . . explain . . ."

The violence with which Billy released his victim sent him staggering across the room.

"I don't want to hear any explanations," he snarled.

III.

"I now know," reflected Hilary, on his way from Marigold Terrace to the Abbotsfords' house in Maida Vale, "precisely what people mean by 'three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage'. And I haven't got it. If I had . . ."

Even to himself he could not put into words precisely what he would have done. Lacking this ultimate steadfastness, he seemed to have recanted his faith, relinquished his manhood and surrendered the right to call his soul his own. He had also, if the "engagement" came to be announced publicly, placed himself at the mercy of "Clémentine" and of a brother who had many points in common with Margery's seismic soldier.

It was not, Hilary considered, physical

fear that had occasioned his collapse: with Billy's hands at his throat, he felt that he was in equal danger of being murdered if he claimed Margery or repudiated her. "There's no pleasing him," was her detached comment. And in truth Hilary's downfall was not complete until Billy had slammed and cursed his way out of the house. The coward, the liar, the poltroon and the renegade were born in the moment when the assistant-demonstrator, still bleating of explanations, found that he could explain nothing. Once more, he had failed; and the "Clémentine" tragedy was due to be played again, with variations.

"I funked telling Margery that it was all a misunderstanding," Hilary fumed. "I was afraid of hurting her feelings, afraid of making her think she'd chucked herself at me, afraid of seeing her cry. I was afraid of being cross-questioned by that appalling father of hers. And the result . . .

The result was that Margery had kissed him, that there was to be a "serious talk to-morrow about ways and means" and that in the meantime he was hurrying to find out whether his cousin Bryan was really, as she suspected, secretly married. Four millions might drop into their laps, she whispered exultantly, if they did not waste time; and, whatever happened, they could count on a hundred thousand.

"She may let me off, if I shew there's nothing doing," Hilary told himself without conviction. "Or, on the other hand, she may stick to me like a leech and make me blackmail Bryan. Meantime, we're engaged!

Engaged!"

Even if providence intervened to save him from marrying this girl who had only followed him to Bloomsbury when he so rashly told her of his legacy, his mouth was for ever stopped from fulminating against the marriage of the unfit. He was at the mercy of this Billy, of the Dalmaynes, of any one else to whom they exposed him as a man who preached of racial health when it suited his pocket, but who forgot his preaching when it suited his pocket to make just such a marriage as he had condemned in others. Should they refrain from exposing him to "Clémentine" and the world, he was still exposed to himself as a man too silly and helpless to look after

As he reached his cousin's house, Hilary determined that he would at least look after himself now.

"I suggested the other day," he reminded

Bryan, "that it would pay us all to make a pooling arrangement over our grandfather's

money . . ."

The youngest Abbotsford, who embodied -to Hilary's envious eyes-every quality of health and vigour required for the regeneration of the race, received his caller with a brusqueness that boded ill for "friendly arrangements".

long hair, his sleekness and laziness, he looked almost a match for Billy.

"It depends on the man. The whole or nothing for me. Now, you're not a starter

"Don't you be too sure of that," Hilary interposed and was elated to observe that Bryan was startled out of his maddening composure. Adroitly handled, Bryan would



"And I said I couldn't see it," he answered.

"Why, we should each make sure of a competence! And the man who won wouldn't grudge twenty-five per cent. of the total."

Bryan stood up and stretched himself luxuriantly. With his loose limbs and

confess and come to terms, even as Margery had predicted! "Don't you be too sure of that," Hilary repeated.
Smoothing his many-coloured sweater

with one hand, Bryan pointed with the other to his cousin's coat-pockets, which, as ever, were bulging with pamphlets:

"I was judging by your well-known

views on the marriage of the unfit."
"My views are that with human beings,

"My views are that with human beings, as with horses, you should breed only from the best stock, but if a man satisfied the terms of an iniquitous will by submitting to a form of marriage . . ."

to be the moment for taking him off his guard.

"You can help me," Hilary broke out abruptly, "by saying whether you're married already!"

For several minutes there was no answer.



"Attaboy! Go in and win!" cried Bryan. "All the same," he added contemptuously, "I don't see you marrying."

"I could marry to-morrow if I chose," Hilary boasted.

Bryan smiled at him with faint incredulity which turned to amused surprise as he stepped forward to brush a streak of powder from Hilary's shoulder.

"Then why don't you?"

"Because it's vitally important, before any of us marry, that we should know how the others are situated. If some one has stolen a march on the rest of us . . ."

"I should have thought," Bryan interrupted, "it was only important that we should be sure we were in love with the people we contemplated marrying. That's a thing you must decide for yourself. I can't help you."

His drawling voice was so complacent that, if he was to be caught, this seemed Though he had been ruffled and flushed for a moment, Bryan was now composed again.

"I suppose that would help," he answered at last, standing with bent head, one foot on a chair, and digging with a hairpin at a choked pipe. "If you're marrying for the sake of the money . . ."
"Well, is it true?" Hilary demanded

"Well, is it true?" Hilary demanded in a tone sharpened by inquisitions on the charwomen who disturbed the apparatus of unfinished experiments in his laboratory.

"Who put the idea into your head? This girl you're thinking of marrying? If so, she seems to have an eye to the main chance."

"Any one could see there was something up when you refused to come into the pool! Of course, you've married this girl on the sly! If any of us shewed you up . . ."

Bryan knocked out his pipe and began to fill it again.

"That sounded rather like a threat," he murmured, walking slowly to the door. "Did the lady whom you could marry to-morrow, if you chose, suggest that you should blackmail me to-day?"

To such a question, Hilary decided, there was no dignified answer. That Margery had in all probability trained her guns on him from the moment when she heard about his legacy Bryan seemed to have guessed. He had not yet guessed, however, and he would never understand that, even more than a share in their grandfather's fortune, Hilary now desired irrefutable evidence that neither by marrying nor by remaining single, neither by speaking nor by holding his tongue could he expect to touch a penny of it. If once Margery could be convinced of that, the so-called engagement would have a short life and he need fear no more an announcement which would bring "Clémentine" back. To get Margery and to lose the money . .

"I have told you it is vitally important that I should know how I stand. Though I need all the money I can find for my work, I am not seeking a penny for myself now. If you admit, what I have a perfect

right to know . . ."

"I admit nothing to people who threaten me. If you think you've a secret to sell, try to find some one who'll buy it. Do whatever you please so long as you don't come here bothering me. Of course, if you're in earnest about this girl, I should like to help you. I believe marriage would be the making of you; and the family will be delighted . . ."

"I advise you not to make any statements about me that I have not authorized," said Hilary, trying to resist with dignity the massive hand that was propelling him out

of the house.

"I can help you in a hundred ways without that," Bryan answered grimly. "Well, good-bye! Let me know when you have another book on the stocks."

IV.

"Bluff," murmured Hilary at short intervals on his way back to the Biological Institute. "He didn't deny it because he couldn't deny it. He didn't admit it, though."

At the end of the interview, indeed, he was no better off than at the beginning; and he had perhaps made an enemy of Bryan. This possibility, however, troubled

him less than the certainty that he had to meet the Dalmaynes on the morrow. If he held to the "engagement", Clémentine would descend upon him, letters in hand. If he told Margery, with the directness which people like Bryan possessed so abundantly, that there had been a misunderstanding, the first thing, he supposed, would be a visit from Billy, armed with a cane. And, whatever he did, a well-documented story would echo throughout Bloomsbury Square, that the champion of racial regeneration had forgotten his principles when there was a chance of inheriting a fortune and had only remembered them again when the chance was found to have come too late. If Margery brought an action, the evidence of Billy and her parents would overwhelm every book and pamphlet that he had ever written; and, when they had finished with him, it would be "Clémentine's" turn to make a meal off the scraps. Whether Margery won or lost the action, he was ruined.

"Bryan says he wants to help me, but I don't believe he means it . . ."

With the arrival of the morning post, however, Bryan's helpfulness was placed beyond doubt. From parcels big and small there rained down on the Biological Institute such advertisements, catalogues, enquiries and quotations as would come to a man whose engagement had already been announced. Insurance companies thrust fire, life and burglary policies at him; house-agents offered him flats, villas and mansions. He was encouraged to furnish on the deferred-payment system; and three jewellers volunteered to send a selection of wedding-rings on approval.

"Bryan's cool," Hilary muttered between his teeth. "Queering my pitch here in revenge for what he calls my blackmail.

Defying me! Well . . ."

He broke off as a visiting-card was brought to his desk on the dais of the lecture-theatre. It was from a firm of caterers, who proclaimed that bridal cakes and wedding breakfasts were a "speciality" with them; and on the back was pencilled "Appointment as per your telephone favour of yesterday".

Hilary stole from the theatre by a private door and melted into the gruesome shades of the Biological Museum. Without studying his direction, he hurried on past grinning skull and placid mummy until he heard his name called. Looking dizzily about him, he found that he had reached the main hall

and that his path was being blocked by Margery.

"You're in a tremendous hurry," she

observed.

"I shall go off my head if there's much more of this," he answered wildly.

"But what's been happening?"

Hilary had to swallow before answering. As he hesitated, Margery's smile—with its hint of a secret shared between themgave him the furious courage that had failed him the day before.

"Happening?" he echoed. "There's a conspiracy to put me in a false position! And, what's more, you started it! What did you mean by telling your precious Billy that we were engaged? You may have accepted me, but I never proposed to you. No. I didn't! I wanted your advice. And because you and he wouldn't let me explain"

He stopped suddenly and mopped his face,

breathing heavily.

"You'll be given every opportunity of explaining things to us all this afternoon," she informed him with dangerous composure. "Meanwhile, I think it would be better if you began at the

beginning."

As she led him firmly into Bloomsbury Square, away from a growing circle of interested students, Hilary described his call in Maida Vale overnight. Whatever interpretation Margery put upon it, she listened in silence; but, when Hilary confessed that he had failed to set up his "pool" or to frighten his cousin with a threat of exposure, she seemed to lose interest in the future of their engagement and directed his attention to her outraged feelings and jeopardized reputation.

"You would never have thought of me if it hadn't been for this money?" she demanded with such accusation in her voice that he was frightened to ask whether she, if it had not been for the money, would ever have thought of him. "You've lived in my pocket, poured out your troubles,

asked my advice . . ."

"Your sympathy and encouragement

. ," Hilary began.

"The people who've seen us together wouldn't believe it was my 'sympathy and encouragement'. They'd say you had no business to get me talked about if you weren't in earnest. That's what my people will say. I don't know what answer you'll have for them . . ."

"I regret the misunderstanding," Hilary

answered stiffly. "If you had given me a chance to explain . . .

"If I brought an action . . . Margery with brightly hostile eyes. in three years . . .

"That," replied Hilary in a phrase borrowed from Bryan, "is a thing you must decide for yourself."

Their aimless walk had brought them to Gray's Inn Road; and the sight of a car heading north seemed to give Margery the inspiration for which she had been waiting.

"One wants a man to deal with people like you," she murmured. "I'm sorry I have no brothers. A real man . . ."

In the person of Billy a "real man" arrived that afternoon at the Biological Institute as Hilary was drafting for his Principal's approval a disclaimer of the report that he contemplated marrying. In his fevered flight from the lecture-theatre he had omitted to clear his table of its catalogues and advertisements; and the students, in his absence, seemed to have been perusing them with gusto. A musician, concealed in the laboratory and equipped with comb and tissuepaper, greeted his return with the opening bars of Mendelssohn's Wedding March; and the blackboard was enriched with a representation of himself as Saint Sebastian flapping impotently at a cloud of arrows with a transfixed copy of The Survival of the Unfittest.

This, Hilary explained to his bored Principal, was the fruit of a practical joke as heartless as it was foolish: some one acquainted with his views on the marriage of the unfit was spreading a rumour of his engagement; and the Institute had been besieged since early morning by agents, canvassers, interviewers and travellers.

"I'm surprised you and your friends haven't outgrown these schoolboy tricks," said the Principal with doubtful justice. "I've no authority over them; but, if I have any more trouble, I shall have to look for another demonstrator. And I warn you that you'll get into trouble with the police if you obstruct the traffic."

He jerked his head towards the window; and Hilary, glancing down on the usually deserted square, drew back with a cry of dismay. Bryan, it seemed, must have dropped a hint that the assistant-demonstrator wished to buy a motor-car suitable for a lady to drive; and the square outside the Biological Institute was blocked with gleamingly new cars, while clusters of nonchalant young men smoked cigarettes before the door.

Hurrying from the Principal's room, Hilary instructed the door-keeper to explain that no enquiries about cars had originated

with him.

"And, if they won't go, they must fight things out with the police themselves," he added hysterically. "I'm not going to see them." He received in silence a list of telephone-calls from shopkeepers asking for appointments. "I can see no one."

It was one thing, he found, five minutes later, as he wrestled with the letters and catalogues that had arrived by later posts, to issue orders to a deferential door-keeper; it was a different thing altogether to enforce them against a man of Billy's inches.

"I threatened yesterday to wring your neck," his visitor reminded Hilary as an

opening to conversation.

"And no doubt you have come to apologize," Hilary answered with the desperate

courage of a cornered rat.

"I've come to find out what you've been up to with Miss Dalmayne. She says now that all this talk of an engagement..." His attention was caught by the picture of a giant wedding-cake; and he turned on Hilary with a light of murder in his eye: "Then it is true!"

"That we're going to be married? No, we're not! There was a misunderstanding.

Didn't she tell you?"

"She said it was broken off, so I came to find out for myself. If she thinks she can dangle me on a string and if you think you can compromise a woman . . ."

As Billy drew himself up, Hilary was put in mind of Margery's phrase that there was no pleasing some people. Billy was equally prompt to violence if one admitted

the engagement or denied it.

"She isn't compromised!" he protested wearily. Billy would certainly murder him if he told the full truth of their engagement. "I shouldn't have made her happy . . . ," he added with tentative wistfulness.

"Then what did you want to butt in

for ? "

"It was a misunderstanding. With great respect, I wouldn't marry her if I could. If I undertake in writing that I'll never see her again . . ."

Billy stared incredulously from the catalogues on the table to the line of cars in the

street outside.

"But you've been making all your plans and preparations! Every one will say you've chucked her!"

At sight of the offending literature under which his table was submerged, Hilary caught the infection of his companion's

fury

"No one will say it, because no one knows! This is the handiwork of a practical joker who wants to compromise me! In my unfortunate condition of health it would be absurd for me to think of marrying. If you want to protect Margery's good name, you must teach this practical joker a lesson."

Billy reflected for a moment, then reached for his stick. With his huge shoulders and bullet head, thought Hilary, he looked

almost a match for Bryan.

"Who is the feller?" asked Billy.

"Where does he live?"

As the last offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields were closing that afternoon, Hilary Fairfax rang the bell of a door inscribed with the name of Plimsoll, Mackworth and Plimsoll, Solicitors and Commissioners for Oaths. Out of the turmoil and agony of the last two days one thing, one thing only, had been gained; and Hilary found himself repeating Margery's phrases of the afternoon before: "It's much more likely that they're married already . . . Would any man throw away the chance of getting a hundred thousand for nothing if he wasn't absolutely sure of getting very much more for less than nothing?" Though Bryan would admit nothing, Hilary was convinced in his own mind; and he was calling to expose his cousin.

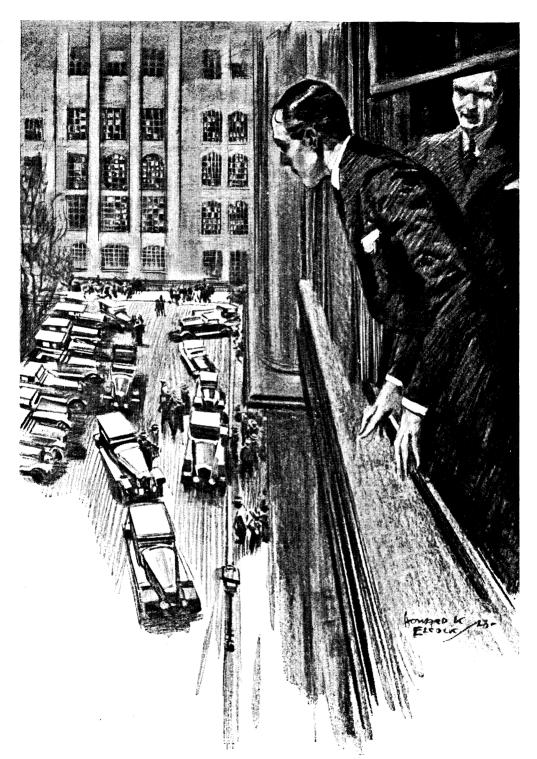
"I want you to make Bryan see that the game's up," he told the solicitor. "If he won't come into the pool, I shall inform

against him."

Mr. Plimsoll looked with mingled distaste and concern at the agitated youth before him.

"You believe your cousin has married clandestinely?" he asked. "He has not told me; and, until one of you puts in a claim for your grandfather's money, I can do nothing. If you're right in your supposition, you'll be well advised to make friends with Bryan."

"After to-day?" Hilary sprang up and paced rapidly backwards and forwards. Forty-eight hours earlier he had been a happy man, contented with his work and pleased with his prestige. His juvenile scrapes were behind him; and he had looked forward to a life of public usefulness and private security. Now he was the



"The square outside the Biological Institute was blocked with gleamingly new cars."

laughing-stock of the Institute; and the Principal had warned him that, if there were any more trouble from him or his "friends", a new assistant-demonstrator would have to be sought. "I'm going to

have Bryan in prison over this!"

"I don't know how that will help you," sighed Mr. Plimsoll, "even if you're successful, which I doubt. Bryan has proved himself rather a formidable opponent. If I were you, I should be grateful at having got off so lightly. You've narrowly escaped being blackmailed by one harpy; you've been within easy distance of an action for breach of promise by another; and you may think yourself lucky to have escaped a horsewhipping to-day. Nothing in all this can be attributed to Bryan; but, when you fell foul of him, he lost no time in hitting back. I've suggested before now that a vendetta of this kind is what your grandfather would most have liked to see. If this money was used to bait a trap, you've fallen in more deeply than any one . . ."

Hilary snatched his hat and moved towards

the door.

"I wouldn't touch the miserable money!" he cried.

"Humbug!" retorted Mr. Plimsoll.

"I tell you I wouldn't! But I'm going to make Bryan smart for this. You're all alike, you all think you can make a fool of me! Because I'm not as strong as other

people . . ."

Mr. Plimsoll shook his head mournfully and held out his hand. Hilary's weakness lay in his nerves and brain rather than in his body; and at the present rate he was shaping for an early breakdown.

"You've allowed this money to become an obsession with you, Hilary . . ."

The conscientious celibate, however, was

no longer listening.

"If Bryan doesn't want to be broken, he'll be well-advised to make friends with me," he threw back.

The door slammed; and furious feet

hurried down the stairs.

"This interview began in farce," Mr. Plimsoll murmured uneasily. "I'm not sure it isn't going to end in tragedy. If I ever doubted the purpose underlying John Datchley's will, I doubt it no longer. The next scene, if it isn't laid in a prison, will be in a mad-house."

Hereafter follows The Adventure of the Agent Provocateur.

ROMANCE.

VILLANELLE.

THE sun was shining on the sea,
The sky was blue, so were your eyes,
And I was only twenty-three

And you were even less, so we Made no pretence of being wise. The sun was shining on the sea

And on the land, on you and me— And him alas. I said "Time flies" And I was only twenty-three,

But I had reason you'll agree. I mentioned ('twas to temporise) The sun was shining on the sea

And on the land. He left us. Tea For two, romance and glad emprise! The sun was shining on the sea And I was only twenty-three.

C. W. WESTRON.

BEASTS AT **EPHESUS**

By IOAN SUTHERLAND

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

the little township not far from Overhead stars were already out in the African sky, and beyond the outskirts of the little town, and away from the lights, the plains stretched away to the north and

THE African sun had just died down

over the mountains to the south of

west, dim and mysterious in the night.

Two men, Hugh Collitt and Dick Coburn, had been dining together. Dick, an old acquaintance of Collitt's in town, had just come out to manage his father's propertyproperty which had been left alone and badly handled for some years. Sir Henry Coburn, being a rather eccentric and changeable man, having some years ago bought property in Kenya Colony, had left it alone entirely, remembering it only after the War, when he desired to get his second son away from London out to some place where he might make a successful living; for Dick hated office life, detested the idea of going into the City, whether on the Stock Exchange or elsewhere, or following his father in the more distinguished life of the Bar.

Viola, his twin sister, had insisted on coming out with him, and neither Lady Coburn nor Sir Henry had objected, since there were two younger sisters at home and Viola would probably marry very much better in Kenya Colony than she would remaining in London, with occasional visits abroad, or hunting in the winter in the shires with various uncles and aunts who might or might not

give her invitations.

Collitt, on the other hand, had been out for several years—a man a good deal older than Coburn, tall, heavily built, rather goodlooking in a ponderous way, and with something not altogether pleasant about his eyes. He had been at school with Coburn, but very much his senior, and the two had not met much until the War. They were not friends in any sense of the word. Coburn was frank, sunny-tempered, cheery. He had not very much use for Collitt, because in his own mind he thought him rather a bounder, but since he had been in Kenya Colony Collitt had been very kind and had put him wise as to various details of managing a neglected farm and native labour, but Coburn, not being a fool by any means, had more than a suspicion that Viola was the reason for Collitt's kindness and the trouble he had taken to help him.

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This evening after dinner the talk had turned on the neighbouring farms, and Coburn suddenly turned on Collitt with an

unexpected question.

"Collitt, is there a man named Morland anywhere round here?" he asked, and unsuspicious as he was, he could not fail to see that Collitt started a little at the question.

"Yes, why? Do you know him? fellow named Jack Morland. He has a coffee plantation four or five miles the other side of the town. Friend of yours?"

Coburn shook his head.

"No, not exactly. I knew him at home. I heard he was out here. Why?"

Collitt shrugged.

"Oh, no reason, but when you asked I wondered if he were an intimate friend. fellow-won't meetDoesn't seem to care to be sociable at all. Making a success of his farming, though."

"Well, that's something. Wish I could say the same," Coburn said, grinning. "But I should like to see Morland again."

Directly he had spoken he cursed himself, for Viola had had a brief engagement to Collitt during one of the long leaves he took in England, and when she broke it off, there were a good many who said it was because of Jack Morland. So he said no more about Morland but changed the subject rather hurriedly.

His question had been in the nature of a

draw and he did not wish to discuss Morland with Collitt, for it was quite natural that Collitt did not like Morland. It was a certainty that Morland would not like Collitt. Pretending he had no further interest in the matter, and presently saying "Good night," he went out to where his shabby Ford waited for him, and with thanks for his evening he drove away on his ten-mile run back to the little farm where his sister awaited him with her big wolfhound and a funny little Scotch foreman he had brought out with him to keep her company.

When Coburn had arrived in Kenya Colony eight months before, it was to find a ramshackle house, dilapidated buildings, land overgrown with weeds and useless for either stock or planting. Now, in a few months, thanks to a tremendous power of work hitherto only latent in himself, and the knowledge of MacPherson the foreman, who had a gift for handling the native, the place was beginning to look well cared for and

might in time become prosperous.

Viola, tired of English life, had thoroughly enjoyed the change, but had been out only a few weeks. She, like her brother, was sunny-tempered, capable, with a keen sense of humour, and a generous disposition. She loved Kenya and its freedom. She revelled in the colour, the great space, the sunshine, the novelty. She made light of difficulties, the best of inconveniences, and was an ideal companion for her brother. Already the little farm was a popular resort for all the white people within a radius of twenty-five miles. Viola was a friendly soul, ready to be charming to most people and to see the good in them. Dick let her go her own way, only giving a tip now and then if undesirables turned up, for, young as he was, he had a very shrewd knowledge of his own sex.

Driving home this night along the rough road, he found himself thinking all the while of the man of whom Collitt had spoken so slightingly. That there was a story behind Jack Morland's sudden disappearance from London he knew well, and that it was of no pleasant character. Jack Morland, the only son of a brilliant politician, after a spectacular career during the War, of great bravery, had returned to London and was making a name for himself as a playwright and novelist. He was very good-looking, attractive and brilliant, and his success had been as phenomenal as anyone could wish. Its end was equally dramatic. A scandal at the Club, a charge of flagrant and disgraceful cheating

at cards, a blow struck in anger in the sacred precincts, and London was an impossible place for its erstwhile favourite.

Morland and Viola had been friends during the last month or two before the crash. Sometimes Dick wondered if they had been more than friends. For some weeks after Morland's departure Viola had been very silent, and although she had gone about as usual and done all the things that she always did, there had been no real enjoyment in the doing of any of them-none of her old gaiety or delight, and when quite by accident Dick learnt that Morland had gone out to a lonely ranch in Kenya Colony, and had himself agreed to his father's proposal that he should go out, Viola had from that moment insisted upon joining him. She had not come out immediately, indeed it was just four weeks since she had arrived at her brother's home, and so far she had no idea that Collitt was in the neighbourhood. had not best pleased Coburn when he found that out, knowing of their short and rather hectic engagement two years before. just a fortnight before she broke off that engagement that there had been gossip about herself and Morland amongst their friends.

All these things Coburn thought over as he drove home. Viola would be furious when she knew Collitt was living not ten miles away. She would be equally excited when she heard of Jack Morland's proximity. Collitt had taken the news of her coming very well, even as he had taken the breaking off of their engagement, but Dick did not flatter himself that he was undisturbed by either. For one thing, Collitt was a conceited man. It would infuriate him that any girl engaged to him should give him up for a man even as brilliant and successful as Jack Morland.

When Morland had left England Collitt had once more attempted to regain the old footing with Viola, but in vain, and now fate by some big chance had thrown the three of them together in circumstances which might prove to be very difficult. is not easy in a lonely half-civilised country for white neighbours to be unfriendly with one another, and Dick realised that there might be some very awkward moments ahead. Being a young man who generally preferred to take the bull by the horns, when he reached home he put away his car, shouted an order to his boy and went in over the little rough wooden verandah to the sitting-room where Viola sat waiting for him. A slim brown-eyed girl, with bobbed

"Have you yourself seen Morland yet?"
"No," Coburn said, "I have not seen him hair that waved above a charming, eager young face, a girl whose personality was vital, who could never be a nonentity, who for two months. I did see him once, just was not in any way beautiful, but far more for a few minutes. He seemed rather disattractive than if she had possessed mere loveliness. Seeing her brother, she jumped up with an exclamation of pleasure, clapped her hands, and when the houseboy appeared she told him to bring in drinks, then pushing across the cigarettes, sat down near him. "Now tell me your news—whom did you meet? What happened? What have you done and what are you going to do?" Dick, realising that he had better be fairly frank, set about giving her an account of his evening and of the mention of Jack Morland's name. Impulsive as she generally

"" Why, Viola, what's the matter? Let me help you, and looking up she saw Collitt standing close beside her."

was, Viola listened this time without one single interruption, and when he ended, Dick saw that she was very pale and her eyes dark as if with unshed tears. She defied him to notice any sign of emotion by giving no heed to it herself, and only put one question in a rather hurried voice.

gruntled at anyone he knew meeting him at all."

"I expect he was," Viola said rather slowly. "It's queer how he disappeared. It wasn't kind. He didn't give us any chance to find out what was the matter except just that possible scandal, as if any

friends would have stopped to judge him on that! What is the good of friendship if it doesn't stand by when there is suspicion or trouble?"

"That's all very well, my dear," Coburn said, "but it is an ugly thing for a man to be accused of cheating at cards and in such a way as he did, at his own club. Very ugly."

"Do you believe it?" There was indignation in Viola's tone. "You, who were a friend of his? Why, it is ridiculous, absurd! I wouldn't believe it if I saw him do it with my own eyes. He could not do it. He just wasn't that sort of man."

Her indignation was so unexpected that Coburn looked at her sharply. It had occurred to him before that Viola cared for Jack Morland, but he had not been sure. He was devoted to his sister, and the expression of her voice, the flush on her cheeks, the flame in her eyes, all now told their own tale. He was silent for a moment, then he got up, knocked his pipe out on his heel, and said rather awkwardly:

"Time we were going to bed, old lady; it is getting late. We will talk in the morning," and avoiding her eyes he went across to the door and held it open for her to go out.

It was the next afternoon, after a morning spent in much deliberation and not a little perplexity, that Viola made up her mind what to do. She made no secret of the fact to herself that she cared for Jack Morland and believed in him to the utmost. The scandal which had resulted in his sudden departure from England had not been a public one except among his own set, but it had been sufficient to ruin him, and he had left very suddenly. As her brother had said the night before, to be accused of cheating at cards in your own club is an ugly thing to occur to any man. Morland had been known as a good bridge player. He was also known to be at the moment rather heavily in debt. No one minded that very much. He was liked, even loved, by his friends. He had had rather bad luck since the War and had just turned the corner, with the prospect of more than usual success in front of him, when the scandal occurred. He had enemies, since every man worth his salt must have them, and those enemies had not lost time in saying that for some while he had made a practice of winning money unfairly. The scandal really arose from the melodramatic fact of a marked card, and that card had been noticed by one of his opponents, the very man to whom Dick Coburn had been talking the night before, Collitt. The circumstances

had been difficult. Morland was a man of quick temper, and, despite the fact that the other opponent refused for a moment to credit his unfair knowledge of the cards, he knew that there were people even in his own club who would be ready enough to listen to Collitt's accusation.

Collitt's attitude had been admirable; restrained, dignified, shocked. spoken to Morland in front of the two other players with restraint, and Morland in the first flash of anger had done a foolish thing. He had lost his temper, been furiously angry and hit Collitt between the eyes. Such conduct at such a place was sufficient at once to turn the feelings of the older men especially against him. There was the opinion that an innocent man would not have acted in such a violent and unreasonable manner. People began to talk, to question, to wonder. Their question and their wonder came quickly enough to the ears of a man as sensitive and as proud as Morland was. suddenly, and apparently for no reason, he left London and England, and the next thing that anyone knew was that he was in Kenya Colony on a small farm of his own. Even his most intimate friends found such a departure and such silence difficult to understand, and Morland himself, furious at his own loss of temper and his behaviour the face of such an accusation, knew he had been foolish and determined to cut everything in the old life until he could prove his innocence beyond doubt.

Only one thing had really hurt him and made him bitterly remorseful of his own foolish attitude, and that was the presence in England of Viola Coburn and his love for her. He had meant to propose to her. He knew she liked him, hoped that she cared more than liking, and despite the letter that he received from her, just a little note of charming sympathy, and equally charming indignation that anyone should believe such a thing against him, he did not write, did not send her one single word, but left England and started on his new life in Kenya Colony.

Dick had not actually mentioned Collitt's presence in Kenya. He had admittedly been a coward—gone off to look after some of the cattle without saying one word, and Viola, rather quieter than usual, had been turning over in her mind all she had heard and was now determined at any cost to see Morland.

Getting out their little car, she had it filled and drove into the town, made a few purchases which she did not particularly want, as an excuse, and inquired at the post office quite deliberately for Morland's address. She was given it—everybody knew and liked Viola—and went off along the rough road in the direction of Morland's ranch, which she was not destined to reach.

Five miles farther on the ominous bumping of the car warned her of a puncture, and with a muttered remark she got down and saw a perfectly flat back tyre. Viola was no weakling—there was nothing to do but mend it. She had already realised out in the Colonies it was best to be able to help yourself, and though she grumbled a little, she set about her task with workmanlike ability. Just as she was stooping over the last nut—hot, rather greasy about the hands and with a large smudge on one cheek—a voice made her jump—a voice she knew and had hoped never to hear again.

"Why, Viola, what's the matter? Let me help you," and looking up she saw Collitt

standing close beside her.

Just for a second she stared at him, unwilling to believe her eyes. Then, ignoring his question, she got to her feet.

"What are you doing here?" she said.
"I didn't know you were in Africa." And
Collitt laughed, not ill-pleased by her sur-

prise.

"I have a farm out here," he said. "I thought you knew it. I used to come out quite regularly when we were all in England together. It is quite a hobby of mine, coffee-growing. Hasn't Dick told you that he had dinner with me last night?"

Viola's young shoulders stiffened.

"Dick had dinner with you? No, he didn't tell me." And then, realising that she had been extremely ungracious, she managed to smile and say more affably:

"I really am sorry to be so snappy, but I have had such a struggle with this tyre that I am frightfully hot. How do you do?" And she held out an oily slender hand.

Collitt laughed, took the hand, held it a moment longer than was necessary and then took over the wheel with admirable selfcontrol. Then:

"What a pity I came almost too late," he said. "At least I can just finish these nuts. They are hardly tight enough "—and taking the spanner, he gave a final twist to the nuts, put the spanner back in the tool-box and stood upright.

"Well," he said, "this is really rather an unexpected delight. I knew you were coming out. I expect Dick meant to tell you

and just forgot, or else thought that you knew I was here. How are you, Viola?" And then he came just a step nearer. "My dear," he said, and although Viola flinched a little at the endearment he did not heed, but repeated it. "My dear, I know you don't care for me. I realise that, but don't let it spoil our friendship. Let's be friends. are out here together. I shall be here for another three months, and it seems such a pity that we should either of us feel sore about "-he hesitated for a moment, then added-"about the past. Let's forget about it, Viola. I know you can't care for me and I'm not going to worry you, but let me have the pleasure of your companionship when you can."

Viola was young and enthusiastic. She was naturally inclined to think the best of everyone and she believed that Collitt had cared for her very deeply. His attitude was an immense relief—more than she realised, and at his question she put out her hand

and smiled up at him.

"Why, that's awfully nice of you," she said frankly. "I'd be only too glad. It would be such a pity, wouldn't it, if we couldn't be friends, and, as you say, especially out here? Tell me all about your farm. Where are you?" Generously eager to make up for any suffering she might have caused him, she let him persuade her to get in his car and sit beside him under the shade of the trees while they talked, and as they sat there, talking, a man came by on a motor-bicycle.

The sound of a motor-bicycle in such wilds was to Viola unusual enough, but as it approached she glanced round, stared, started and stopped abruptly in the middle of what

she was saying.

"Jack!" she cried, "Jack!"; but the rider went on after one quick glance as he passed at the two people sitting in the big touring car. He did not look again, but staring straight in front of him quickened his pace and disappeared in the far distance along the rough trail. It was Collitt who spoke first.

"Didn't you know Morland was here either?" he said in a rather peculiar voice, and Viola, never noticing his change of tone,

turned to him with eyes shining.

"Yes," she said, "I knew that. Dick told me. Why didn't he wait? He must have seen it was I."

"I don't suppose he was particularly anxious to see you," Collitt said rather significantly. "He is rather a recluse, you know.

After all, it is hardly to be wondered at, is it? Nobody likes to be assumed to be what he was."

For a moment Viola was silent. Her pleasure in Collitt's society had suddenly vanished. All she wanted was to drive after that motor-bicycle, and Collitt, quick enough to realise changes of mood, knew how she felt and set about the task of undermining and destroying her loyalty.

"It is rather wonderful of you to believe in him so," he said. "Women are wonderful, though. He's lucky." This time the significance of his tone did not escape Viola.

Turning to him sharply, she said:

"What do you mean exactly? Do you mean that you believe Morland guilty?"

There was a moment's silence; then he

laid his hand over hers.

"Viola," he said, "you know I was one of the men playing against Morland when he was accused. There was not any possibility of mistake. He had marked cards. Do you think I wasn't as sorry as anyone? It was a ghastly business. I never want to be present at such another scene. That's all. Now you understand why he didn't want to stop, or even to appear to see you when he saw us together."

This time it was Viola who was silent, stunned by what she had heard. Even now her belief in Morland did not falter, but she did realise that Collitt had a good deal on his side. After all, why had Jack behaved so stupidly? Why had he not waited to justify himself? He was liked, he was even loved. It was absurd to go off and behave as he did. And then, swiftly on top of those worrying thoughts and criticisms came the desperate need of seeing him. She realised quite suddenly what her presence with Collitt, in Collitt's car, on this rather deserted road, might look like to Morland. Suddenly she got up.

"I am sorry," she said. "I oughtn't to have stayed so long. I have got things to do this morning. It was awfully kind of you to finish my tyre for me. I suppose we shall see you over at the ranch before long?"

Collitt, wise enough to know when he had said enough, nodded, jumped out of the car,

and handed her down.

"Yes," he said, "of course I'll come over. I should love to. Don't worry about anything. Things will come right, you know. I can't do any more for you? Very well then. My love to Dick." And smiling, he watched her start.

His manner had been perfect. He was

clever enough to know that any attempt to blacken Morland further in the eyes of this girl who believed in him would not only be useless but fatal to his own chance. He was determined on his own line of action, and as he drove away was very well content with his morning's work.

As for Viola, she realised how useless it was to try to find Morland now. He had had far too long a start; so, angry, disappointed and worried, she turned the car back on to the road and headed for home, and there later on told Dick of the morning's happenings, being not a little indignant that he had not warned her that Collitt was in the neighbourhood.

As for Jack Morland, riding into town to order some more cattle-feed, his feelings were even stormier than Viola's. No one knew how passionately he had loved her, or what her loyalty had meant, and more than once he had been tempted to write and tell her the real truth, but pride stood in his way-pride not only for himself, but a certain rather fine decency which forbade him to give away to her a man she had once intended to marry. He had known she was coming to visit Dick, and had looked forward to her arrival with no little emotion. He had meant to see her. It was easier to talk than write, but the sight of her in Collitt's car, talking to him apparently in deep conversation and content in his society, had been to him like a blow between the eyes. He knew quite well that Collitt had never despaired of regaining Viola's attention, once he, Morland, were out of the way, and he had not scrupled to put him out of the way. He realised that also. Grim and rather pale under his tan, with set jaw and sullen eyes, he went about his business, which was on the other side of the town.

Unexpectedly, Jack Morland had to return to the club after seeing a man about some cattle that he intended to buy at a farm a few miles the other side of the town, and since it was getting near the time for sundowners, he went into the club, which was very much against his usual habit, for he avoided every possibility of meeting his fellow-men.

The bar was empty but for two men, whom he knew slightly, and in whom he had no interest—the elder, a large bluff individual who had spent most of his life in Africa, and was very keen on big-game shooting, by name Raines, an agreeable if a rather rough diamond. The other, known as Shorty, was his partner.

They both looked up as Morland came in, shouted a pleasant greeting, and suggested his joining them for a drink. Agreeing, he went over and Raines started saying he had heard there were lions in the neighbourhood—a rare enough thing in this part of the Colony.

Morland, who was an excellent shot and very keen to get a lion, took on a bet with Shorty that he would be the first to spot the animal, and with a certain amount of careless good-humour and chaffing each other, they were all having their sundowners when Collitt entered the bar. Morland saw him first, and stiffened at the sight of him, set down his glass and sat very still, almost as if waiting for the storm that might follow. Collitt, strolling across towards the bar, did not at first see who was with Raines and Shortv. and when he did, started, rather more elaborately than was necessary, and stood stockstill. Raines, who never saw anything smaller than a haystack in the matter of moods and prejudices of the men around him, noticed nothing, but Shorty, keen as his own little hatchet features, saw the look on the two men's faces and realised that here might be what he considered a bit of fun. It was the first time, thanks to Morland's deliberate avoidance of the club, that he and Collitt had met face to face in so public a place, and they were both for a moment unpleasantly taken aback.

Collitt, however, appeared to take no further notice, ordered his drink, turned to another man who had come in just behind him, and Morland resumed his interrupted talk about game near the township which Shorty had raised. It was not until the bar had considerably filled up with the club members that Collitt set down his glass and strolled over to the table where the three sat. He ignored Morland, and spoke deliberately

to Raines.

"Evening, Raines. You and Shorty seem rather hard up for company," he said, and Shorty, his little eyes narrowed and his little whipcord figure stiffened at the tone; but he left it to Raines to answer.

"Hard up?" said that cheerful individual. "I don't quite see why. We've got Morland. Do you want to join us?"

"Yes, so I see," Collitt drawled. "No, thanks. I may be a pretty rough lot, but I don't care about sitting down with a card-sharper."

His tone had been loud, and as the words fell on a comparative silence, all talking and, it seemed, all movement ceased, and every eye was turned to the corner where the four men were.

Unnoticed by anyone, Coburn at that moment had come into the room. He had had to motor into the town unexpectedly, and had brought Viola in with him, thinking that she seemed rather depressed and not wishing to leave her alone at the farm. He had now left her in the car outside and come in for a drink, just in time to see Morland facing Collitt across the little table, white, tense, dangerously still, and instantly his instinct to help one of his own people asserted itself. He walked across the room and went over to Morland's side.

"What's up?" he said. "What are you two glaring at each other for like a couple of dogs spoiling for a fight?"

No one answered, but Morland, pushing him gently aside, walked round the table and spoke to Collitt.

"If you will come outside," he said in a very quiet voice, "we will settle this matter decently, away from the crowd," whereupon Collitt laughed.

"Oh, will we?" he said. "I don't fight, any more than I drink, with men of your kidney, Morland. It is about time somebody taught you that lesson. As I say, we are a rough lot out here, but we are not keen on the Colonies being filled up with men who have been kicked out of their clubs at home for cheating at cards."

It was Coburn who sprang forward, but too late. Morland's fist had shot out and caught the other between the eyes, knocking him backwards over a chair, and Morland, no longer grimly silent, was standing over him,

eves ablaze.

"You will have it, will you?" he said.
"Very well, then, you shall," and as Collitt, cursing, got to his feet, he made a spring at him almost like that of a wild cat. The movement seemed to release onlookers from their forced inaction. There was a general rush forward, a dragging apart of the two men, and Raines, who by virtue of his old residence in the country was more or less senior in the club, turned from one to the other.

"I don't care a hang about your private quarrels, neither do any of the rest of us," he said. "What we do care about is that this club remains more or less a decent place, where we can get some peace. Now, clear out, both of you, and if you want to quarrel, quarrel outside. Collitt, you had the chance to do that, and I don't blame Morland for what he did. There is something that no

man is going to stand being called": but Coburn's voice unexpectedly intervened.

"I don't think you can settle it that way, Raines," he said; "Morland has a right to some kind of justification. He has the right to defend himself, here and now: Collitt called him a cheat. What is he going to do about that? What right has Collitt got to bring that accusation against him?"

Before Collitt could answer, Morland turned round.

"Thanks all the same, Dick," he said, "but that's my affair. What Collitt said was perfectly true up to a point. I was kicked out of my club at home, and it may interest everybody to know that Collitt himself was my accuser. I did not cheat. I can't say any more than that. A marked card was found in my possession. How that marked card came there I do not know. I had no idea when the round began that it was marked. I have no idea now how it



"It seemed to Morland for a moment that he must be dreaming."



"Lying on his back, and a lion standing there with one paw planted on his chest. The man was not dead."

came to be there. I was pretty heavily in debt at the time. I had been winning heavily the past three days at bridge and the circumstances were against me. Collitt was a senior member; he was also my opponent; I was asked to resign my membership of the club and I did so. Being quite unable to prove anything, I left England. There you have the whole story. Whether you believe it or not is a matter of indifference to me. I am here on my own ground, and here I shall remain; but as for you "-his voice, which had been level and utterly expressionless, suddenly changed; he looked at Collitt with eyes that suddenly blazed—" if ever I have the chance I will make you take back those words. Look out for yourself. won't fight, but the next time I meet you I'll thrash you publicly. Let me go, please," and shaking off the two men who held him, he turned on his heel and in a deathly silence walked across the bar and out of the building.

As he left the room the men who had been holding Collitt let go and he drew out his handkerchief and gingerly touched his slightly grazed forehead, where Morland's knuckle had hit him. He was furiously angry, and deeply flushed, but he turned round on the men and laughed rather roughly.

"Well," he said, " now you know the sort

of fellow you have been having in your midst; a man who has been practically kicked out of London and a London club for cheating at bridge. I hope, Raines, you will tell him he is not wanted here any more."

There was a moment's silence, then Raines said, rather deliberately:

"You can trust me to do all I think is best for the club, Collitt. Good night," and turning on his heel he walked out of the room.

He was crossing the verandah, when Dick Coburn, hurrying after him, touched him on the arm.

"Look here, Raines," he said, "I do not know what you think about this. You probably haven't thought anything yet; you are too surprised. But I tell you I have known Jack Morland since he was a youngster. I don't believe a word of it. I never did. I am convinced that that card was put there into his hand by some enemy, somebody who had a 'down' on him and meant to wreck him, and succeeded. I am not mentioning names. I will prove it before I accuse anyone, but I am sure that Morland never cheated at cards in his life and never did a dishonourable thing. He couldn't. I know Morland."

"What's that, Dick?" Viola's voice made both men start, and turning round Dick saw her on the step beside him, looking from one to the other-her face rather white

-her eyes very dark.

"I have just seen Jack Morland come out of the club," she said. "He walked straight round the car. I called him, but he wouldn't answer. What happened? What do you mean, Dick, by saying what you did? Has anyone accused Mr. Morland?"

Raines glanced from one to the other, then, seeing that Dick did not know what to answer, he spoke for him and told her in a

few brief words what had happened.

At the end, Viola nodded. "I wish I had been there. Mr. Collitt wouldn't have said it twice. The coward! The brute! Dick, I've got to see Jack. I'll tell him that I don't believe it. I'm loyal, whatever all his so-called friends may be."

Her glance of scorn was quite unmistakable. Raines flushed again and moved un-

comfortably.

"Say, look here, Miss Coburn," he said awkwardly, "I never said I believed it. I like Morland—always did. He's a good chap, but I don't like Collitt. You can tell Morland that so far as I am concerned everything that happened to-night is forgotten."

"I don't see ourselves giving him any messages," Dick said rather grimly. "If I know anything of Morland, he won't wait for anyone to tell him anything. He will simply shut himself up in his own place. Jove! If I had the chance of kicking that fellow, Collitt, I would kick him hard and good; but I can't interfere. It's Morland's business. Ah, well, I suppose we had better be getting on. Good night, Raines."

He motioned Viola into the car and followed in beside her. He was just going to start when Raines suddenly put a foot on

the running-board.

"Half a minute," he said. "Shorty tells me there have been lions seen not far away on the road to your place. I don't suppose there is likely to be any trouble, but you might, if you do go out, carry your gun for a bit."

"Shorty must have been drinking," Dick said, trying to laugh, glad of the change of subject. "Lions! Why, there hasn't been any lion round here for five years. Wish there was! I would like to have a shot at it!"

"Well, I have warned you," Raines said.
"I don't suppose there is any truth in it, but still, if I were you I would look out if you are going about much these days, and you, too, Miss Coburn. That's all! Well, good night."

He turned round and went back up the steps across the verandah into the club, and Dick, driving the car through the little town, said casually to Viola, anxious to distract her mind from the events of the evening in case she should ask further questions:

"Rather fun if we did come across a lion,

old lady, wouldn't it?"

"Very," Viola said colourlessly. She felt in the mood that she didn't care very much whether she met lions or not. "But I expect it wasn't true. I expect the man who said it was drunk, or something like that. People seem to say queer things in this country."

Dick laughed at her. "Don't take it too much to heart," he said. "No one who knows Morland believes for one instant he was guilty. I'll look him up to-morrow."

Viola made no reply, but she slipped her arm inside her brother's and gave it a little squeeze, then sat back in her own seat—her eyes fixed on the moonlit stretch of road ahead.

Meanwhile, Morland was riding back along the same road to his own farm, for the road led straight past Collitt's place on to Coburn's, and then on to his own, which was further still-furious with himself for having lost his temper with Collitt in public, and yet strangely comforted by Dick Coburn's words and action. After all, he had known this must come sooner or later. He had more than once considered what he would do should the accusation be brought against him, and had made up his mind that a plain statement of the facts was due to these men who had accepted him as one of themselves and had behaved decently to him from his first coming into the country. He would have preferred to remain quite silent. pride revolted against even the statement which seemed to him like some justification -almost an excuse, but silence was not fair to those men. In fairness to them he was obliged to state what had happened and then leave it to their own judgment whether or no they accepted him in future.

He was busy on his farm the next afternoon when one of his boys came across from his house telling him a visitor had called to see him. At first he refused to go in, but the boy assured him that it was somebody of importance, and, cursing the interruption, he went back to the house through the hot

afternoon sunshine.

Nobody was on the verandah, so he went into the cool living-room, where, standing in the shadow, her face turned to the door, very pale, her eyes very bright, was Viola Coburn. Morland stopped short on the threshold.

"You!" he said. "You! Why have

you come?"

He had not meant to say so much. He checked the emotion that was surging up through him and tried hard to capture his normal self-possession.

"Please sit down," he said. "I didn't expect this visit. I am afraid the place is in rather a pickle. Did you drive over?"

She ignored the chair he pushed towards her, and coming over stood in front of him.

"Yes," she said, "I borrowed the car and came over to see you. I had to see you. Jack, what happened last night at the club?"

In spite of himself he started.

"What happened?" he said. "Oh, quite

a lot of things. Why?"

"I was outside in Dick's car. I called you, but you just went past. Jack, we were friends in the old days. Why did you go away like that? Why did you leave London without seeing me? I wrote. You might have answered."

He had himself in hand again now, and managed to answer calmly enough.

"I thought it was best to let no one know," he said. "You were very kind. My friends were very kind. They have been here, but it was an unpleasant business, and the sooner it is ended the better. I am sorry I have got in your way this time. I—there seems a kind of fate about it, doesn't there? We are all in a bunch here together—you, and Dick and Collitt," he proceeded quietly. "Yes, and Collitt." Then, changing his

"Yes, and Collitt." Then, changing his tone, he added: "But you and Collitt are friends. I saw you together, yesterday. I am afraid you won't be too pleased with my

conduct towards him."

"Your conduct to Collitt? Not pleased?

I wish you had killed him!"

There was no mistaking the sincerity of her tone, or the blaze that blackened her eyes. Amazed and startled, he stared at her.

"You wish I had killed him?" he said slowly. "But I thought perhaps you and Collitt had decided to—well, make it up again. You used to be engaged."

So that was why he had not spoken to her that day, why he had ignored her. A queer little thrill of triumph ran through Viola's mind. She looked up at him.

"No, we haven't decided to do that. He did ask me to resume our friendship, and I,

very foolishly, agreed; in fact, I was quite pleased. I liked him, you know, even when I felt I couldn't love him, but I suppose everybody is mistaken over people sometimes. I have been mistaken over him. I made Dick tell me, Jack."

Her tone changed suddenly. Coming close to him, she laid her hands on his breast, looking up in his face. "I made Dick tell me," she repeated. "Jack, why can't you treat me as you used to treat me? I"—a faint flush had come to her cheeks, but her eyes were steady—"I thought, Jack, you cared for me a little when we were in London—somehow, once . . . Do you remember that night when you brought me home from the Rutherfords' dance? That night you kissed me, Jack?"

He grew rigid under her touch, his face paled under his sunburn, his eyes darkened, looking down at her with dilated pupils.

"Why do you tell me that?" he asked

hoarsely.

"Because I wanted to tell you something. I wanted to tell you, Jack, that if you did care—I, well, I"—the colour deepened in her face, her eyes met his and looked away—"I wouldn't mind if you wanted to kiss me again."

For a moment he stood motionless, resisting her, fighting the storms of passion and love that surged through him. Then his strength gave way, his arms went out, crushing her close against him, his lips fastened on hers.

Neither of them noticed how quickly the afternoon was ended. There was so much to say. So many questions to ask, the same old questions that are always asked. "Do you love me?" "When did you first care?" "When did you know I cared for you?" All the old questions, the never-wearying questions of people in love, and it was with a shock of dismay that Morland realised it was time she left, unless she was to be caught by dusk on the road.

"My dear," he said, loosening his arms from about her at last. "You must go. I was crazy to let you stay so long. It will be dark before you get home unless you hurry. I'll ride beside you on the motor-bike, see you back safely, and——" She interrupted: "I'm all right, dear. I want to see Dick myself, tell him myself; but I would love you to come with me. Can you?"

"Of course I can, and of course I am coming."

Half-way home, as he rode beside her, a sudden thought struck her and she leaned towards him as he rode along the track beside

"Jack," she said, "have you heard anything of the rumour that there are lions about? That man they call Shorty was

telling Dick yesterday."

"Oh, I heard something about it," Morland said casually, "but there can't be any truth in it. Shorty was drunk-must have been. There hasn't been a lion seen in this neighbourhood for-well, ten years, I should say. Wish there had. I would be glad of the chance of a shot."

"Well, you must come home and get one of Dick's guns," Viola said. "You can't ride back without anything. Just suppose, Jack

-just suppose you met a lion.

At the expression in her voice, Jack gave a sudden shout of laughter, and even to his own ears his laughter sounded strange. was so long since he had laughed—since he

had had anything to laugh at.

"My dear," he said, "just as if there would be any round about here. If Shorty did see a lion-which I don't believe-it was probably twenty-five miles away in the scrub, not anywhere in this part of the country. Don't worry, sweetheart, I'm all right. I have been all right these years without you, and now-well, now I'll take good care no harm happens."

"That's all very well," she said, "but even my love couldn't protect you against a lion, Jack. Don't be an idiot, darling, please don't. Borrow Dick's gun—he'll be in; and

then—we can both tell him."

"I'll do anything in the world you want me to, sweetheart," he said. "If you want me to get a gun I'll get one. I'll hang myself round with a brace of revolvers and cavalry swords as well, if you wish it. All right, I won't tease you. Oh, Viola, my dear, my dear!"

"Don't say things like that when I am driving and you are riding on a motorbicycle," she said. "It isn't a bit the place to make love, Jack. Wait until we get in, and then you can say all kinds of things that I have been longing to hear you say all these years. Oh, Jack, how could you go away

and never let me know?"

Dick Coburn, coming in to supper, was amazed to hear voices from the living-room as he crossed the verandah. He was more amazed to find Jack Morland and his sister deep in conversation, and being by no means an unobservant young man, he had very little need of the words that Viola uttered from the end of the room. One look at their

faces told him the truth, and even as Jack stood up, ready for whatever Dick might choose to say, despite the way he had stuck up for him in public, Dick came across the room and thumped him on the chest.

"Jack," he said, "I meant that vesterday. You knew I meant it. Between us we'll get him. I am pretty sure who it was. I would give ten years of my life to be able to bring it home. Now let us sit down and have supper and talk about something more cheerful."

Manlike, they both refused to discuss the subject either of Jack's engagement or of the scene at the club, both of them hating anything approaching a dramatic scene, and though Viola longed to ask questions, she was far too understanding of the fact to do After all, her chief desire was that Jack should reach home in safety that night, and when he got up to go, very reluctantly, she repeated her request about Dick's gun. They both laughed at her, neither of them in the least believing in what Shorty had said. but willing to please her, Morland took the gun and they saw him off in the moonlight, riding down the road, the rifle slung across

the bars of the motor-bicycle.

It was a gorgeous night, with a full moon, and as he drew near the track that led off to Collitt's farm, two or three miles away to the north, he had a road to pass through a scrub of whitethorn called nyika, some six or eight feet in height. There, suddenly, for no reason, the memory of Viola's fear of the lion and Shorty's remark that a lion had been seen flashed back into his mind. He dismissed it, rather amused than otherwise. but he did take the precaution of pulling up and examining the rifle—why he hardly knew, and as he stood there looking at the loading he heard far off in the night the distant unmistakable throb of an approaching He wondered who could be abroad at this hour, as it was getting late, and was just about to get on his bicycle again and proceed on his way when he realised that the sound had stopped very abruptly.

It occurred to him for a moment that it was peculiar, and then suddenly every nerve was taut in his body, for across the silence of the night rang a cry—a loud cry of fear, unmistakable fear that approached panic in a man's voice—a yell which sounded like a cry for help. Morland waited no longer. Swinging himself into the saddle, he sent the machine up the long slope to the thorn-scrub, as hard as he could go. Here and there a possible skid, but forgetful of everything but that agonised cry, and turning a corner, he had hardly time to throw on his brakes and bring the bicycle to a skidding standstill before he was almost into a car lying on its side across the road.

For an instant he thought the owner of the car must be lying underneath it, then, even as he was about to leave the bicycle and go forward to look, he stopped At the back of his neck the hair began to creep.

Instinctively, more than for any reason, he looked ahead, and there, not thirty yards away, in the full white light of the moon, his tail lashing, one paw planted on the body of a man who had evidently been flung from the car, stood a full-grown lion.

It seemed to Morland for a moment that he must be dreaming. A lion here—a car flung sideways across the road—its occupant lying perhaps twenty yards from it where he had been flung, lying on his back, and a lion standing there with one paw planted on his chest. The man was not dead. From where he stood he could see his face, white, horror-stricken—Collitt's face.

In those first few seconds Morland's first feeling was one of sheer amazement . . . it was so incredible and fantastic that it was absurd, a nightmare from which he must awaken in his own room. And then, almost instantaneously, he knew it was neither incredible nor fantastic, but fact. His enemy lay there in imminent danger of a dreadful death, helpless, agonised, yet for the moment uninjured. He had only to retreat cautiously, step by step, leaving the lion to its prey, and no one would ever know that the choice had been in his hands for life or Death . . . had not Collitt meted out to him a living death? . . . was he not scum of the earth only fit for the dramatic fate that had overtaken him? . . .

It seemed to Morland that hours passed while the fight raged in his soul, yet in reality not twenty seconds went by before irrelevantly and utterly without reason a sentence from some long-known source flashed into his head:

"Fought with beasts at Ephesus—"

Why the great Apostle's words should come back to him at such a moment he could not tell; all he knew was that he must not miss, must control hand and sight with an iron nerve. The lion might charge as he lifted his rifle—if he did, no power on earth could save him, no bullet be fired quickly enough to stop that mighty assault . . . like a flash the rifle went to his shoulder . . . the great beast leaped, roared, plunged for-

ward with wide-stretched mouth and glaring eyes and fell coughing out his life not five yards from Morland's feet.

Morland was taking no chances with a wounded lion, and shouting to Collitt not to move he waited till the great flanks had ceased to heave; then he threw two or three heavy stones at the body, and since the lion did not move he went up and examined him. He was quite dead, with a bullet clean through the brain, and assured of that, Morland went over to where Collitt lay and found him in a dead faint.

Even now, when he had saved his life at imminent risk to himself, Morland felt the greatest repugnance to touching his enemy; but conquering so petty a feeling he made a hasty examination and found that Collitt's leg was broken, owing no doubt to the fall from the car. He was grazed a little by being flung so far, but the lion, save for a ripping tear across the khaki coat, had not touched him, and his escape was miraculous.

The car had a wheel off, and had upset as a result, having swerved violently and hit a big stone, so that it could not be used; the lion's mate might or might not be about, and Collitt could not be left where he was. Since he was unconscious, a little more pain could not hurt him, Morland argued, so, carrying him to the bicycle, he managed by superhuman effort to hold him with one arm across his knees, and ride the remaining two miles to Collitt's house.

Once there he delivered him to his boys, rode grimly enough back to the little township, routed out the hard-headed, retired R.A.M.C. major who practised over a few hundred square miles, and, satisfied that Collitt would be sufficiently looked after, rode home, arriving about four in the morning.

For two days he absented himself deliberately, going off early in the morning and returning at sunset, content only with sending a boy over to Dick Coburn's place with a love-letter for Viola; but on the third he was caught.

The calving of one of his best cows kept him at home, and during the late afternoon three men arrived, crowded into Dick's car—Raines, Dick himself, and the doctor, driven by Viola. Morland, coming in from the cowsheds, found the little group waiting him on the verandah. He saw Viola first, and his eyes met hers in a look that sent the warm colour to her face; but it was Raines who spoke without any greeting or preliminary.

"We've come along to put something right that never ought to have been wrong,"

he said bluntly. "Collitt's told the Major here he was dealer and gave the marked card to you. He'll write to the committee of your club."

Morland looked sharply from one to the

other.

"I'm much obliged to him," he said with a short laugh. "Thought he was going to be killed and became conscience-stricken. Thanks very much for coming to tell me."

The bitterness and sarcasm of his tone made even the slow-witted Raines realise how deeply the iron must have eaten into his soul; he looked helplessly round at the others, and Viola, suddenly putting them aside, came across to Morland, and turning, faced them.

"Mr. Morland and I are going to be mar-

ried almost at once," she said. "We arranged it several days ago. Please tell Mr. Collitt this and say from me that I hope he will find it convenient to sell his farm, as I don't wish ever to meet him again. Jack dear"—with a sudden change of tone she turned to him—"it's quite late and I'm hungry. Let me make some tea, and you find everybody drinks, and then we'll all go into town together and we'll give a party at the club to all our friends." She flashed a smile at the amazed men and slid her hand into Morland's.

"It's a party to celebrate our engagement, so they can't refuse," she added. "And—Jack—you might kiss me. You haven't even said yet that you were glad to see me!"

DARTYMOOR.

SING a song of Dartymoor, ye who Devon love!
Ye who scorn the petrol'd track, far on foot to rove.

Lustleigh Cleave and Fingle Bridge, Brent and Buckfastleigh,
Ashburton to Tavistock, Chagford to the sea.

Hookney Tor and Hameldown, Widecombe and Holne,
Majesty of ancient lore carved in weathered stone.

Longaford and Grimspound, barrow, hut and row,
Built ere scarce our race was born—countless years ago.

Benjie Tor and Sharp Tor, hurrying Dart between,
Cranmere Pool and Sittaford—home of Taw and Teign,
Heathered heights of Ugborough, Honeybags and Hey—
Sweet to nestle in thine arms, through a summer's day!

Leather Tor and Hound Tor, glimpse of Buckland's tower, Raging storm and driving clouds, mist and sudden shower Rugged cliffs and rushing streams, bog and rippling leat, Purple-breasted hills and vales, bracken, furze and peat.

Clapper bridge and blowing stone, ancient kistavaen,
Rippon's head in homage bowed to Bellever—the queen.

Grim, mysterious, worn with age, stark, profound, austere—
Dartmoor! Roam we ne'er so far, our hearts thou holdest here.

ROBERT FALKNER.

CAUGHT BEHIND THE WICKET

STORIES OF GREAT CRICKETERS By HERBERT STRUDWICK

(In this article, the Surrey and All-England wicket-keeper, who retired this season, gives some stories and impressions of the great players he has met during his long career.)

T is often said that the wicket-keeper sees most of the game in cricket. He alone sees where every ball pitches and how the opposing batsmen shape. Like the

bowler, he soon gets to know the weaknesses of cricketers. For twenty-eight summers, with the exception of the War years, and during four tours to Australia and two to South Africa, I have had the opportunity of meeting most of the greatest cricketers of the century at close quarters.

When I first donned the pads for Surrey, W. G. Grace, the G.O.M. of cricket, was still playing. I played against Dr. Grace in 1902 and again in 1903 when he captained the Gentlemen against the Players. Jack Hobbs joined Surrey soon afterwards, but,

like the other players, I little guessed that he was destined to become the greatest batsman of the century and that we should play together some hundreds of matches in

England, Australia and South

Everyone believed that the Doctor's record of more than a century of centuries would stand for long and little suspected that the slim young man who made 88 in his first match against the Doctor would make 150 hundreds in a score of years.

I remember Dr. Grace being impressed with the way Hobbs shaped, but I doubt if even he dreamt of the heights to which the young batsman would rise. Jack Hobbs is the only batsman I have seen who could play every kind of bowling with equal ease under



[Sport and General.

"STRUDDY.

any conditions. Fast, slow, left-hand, googly—they all seem alike to him on dry wickets, wet wickets, or matting. Every other batsman seems to have one weak point in his defence, but even when he makes a duck Jack never looks like getting out!

It was an extraordinary contrast to watch the methods of Hobbs and Rhodes in dealing with the googlies of Faulkner and Vogler

in the 1909-10 Test matches in South Africa. Rhodes played forward and smothered the ball without attempting to score, while Jack stood up and pulled the googly or cut the leg break.

Australia has produced some fine batsmen who might have run Hobbs close in the list of centuries had they been English cricketers. Trumper played some really fine innings on bad wickets, while for brilliance in Test cricket I have seen nothing to compare with Macartney's 151 in the third Test at Leeds during the last tour. remember he received three balls from Macaulay that pitched practically

on the same spot. The first he hit past mid-on for 4, the second past cover point for 4, and the third to square leg for another boundary. The last ball, by the way, just missed a young lady, who jumped up and waved to him. Macartney turned to me and said, "That's funny, that is the girl who asked me for my autograph this morning!"

The first cricketer still playing to-day with whom I was associated was R. Pearson, now of Worcestershire. He played for South London schoolboys when I played for Mitcham boys. He came to live near me at Mitcham soon afterwards. Surrey lost a great cricketer when he joined Worcestershire. I think that with the opportunities provided by playing for a county like Surrey he would have become an All-England player.

Perhaps the most extraordinary man at

the Oval in my early years was Marshal, who left Surrey in 1910. The skipper once found him smoking a cigar at the nets, needless to say against the rules.

"Why are you smoking that cigar, Marshal?" he demanded, and Marshal replied, "Because I don't like a pipe."

Whenever two
of our men
made a stand
he used to say,
"Why can't
those fellows get
out and let me
show them the
way to bat?"

Marshal was a tall man and had a habit of jumping out of bed in the middle of the night to practise a shot. The holes he made in the ceiling with follow - through



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DR. W. G. GRACE, THE G.O.M. OF CRICKET.

shots were the despair of his landlady.

I think Tom Richardson was the finest bowler I have ever taken: modern followers of cricket can have little idea of his terrific speed. Richardson had lost some of his pace when I started keeping for Surrey, but, standing back, I would take a ball that just missed the off stump a yard and a half on the leg side! As I caught it I could feel it still screwing its way through my fingers.

His pace was tremendous, and the best thing the batsmen could do was to touch the ball on the leg side, when it would go off to the boundary. The skipper used to argue with Tom about having a man on the leg side to stop these shots. "No, sir," Tom would reply, "if they can play well enough to hit them, they deserve their runs." He was a great sportsman.

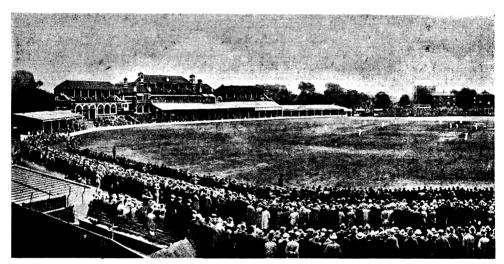
One bowler I have seen who was faster than Richardson; that was Henry, an aboriginal, who played against England on my first Australian tour. Braund received a ball from Henry that jumped over his head, hit the screen before it bounced again, and returned to the wicket! Braund could not stand up to that, and, said he, "I refuse

pain when Trott came up and chuckled, "Did you find it?"

But I did not see the joke.

Trott was a most painstaking bowler. One morning Harry Trott found his young brother bowling at a single stump hidden behind an oil-can. "What on earth are you doing?" he asked. "That can is George Giffen (Australia's greatest allrounder)," replied Trott, "and when I can hit that stump I shall stand a chance of bowling him." He certainly learned to get an extraordinary spin on the ball, which was the terror of most batsmen.

This reminds me of an incident in a Second XI match when Surrey were piling up a good score. Light was bowling for



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A TEST MATCH AT THE OVAL.

to be shot at by the black devil." Fortunately for us, Henry tired very quickly, and no wonder, for he used to finish his run about five or six feet from the batsman. He must have sprinted more than a hundred yards every over.

In 1903 I had to take Trott for the first time in a Gentlemen versus Players match at Lord's, and knowing that he bowled an occasional fast ball, I asked him if he signalled. "No," he replied.

"How shall I be able to spot them?" I asked.

"Oh, you'll soon find the fast ball," he replied with a laugh.

In his third over, Trott bowled a fast yorker which hit me full toss on the left foot before I saw it. I was hopping about in Hampshire when his captain said, "I think we had better change the bowling, Light."

"Right, sir," replied Light, keeping the ball in his hand, "I'll bowl with my other hand."

He could bowl equally well with either hand, the only player I have ever met who could perform this feat.

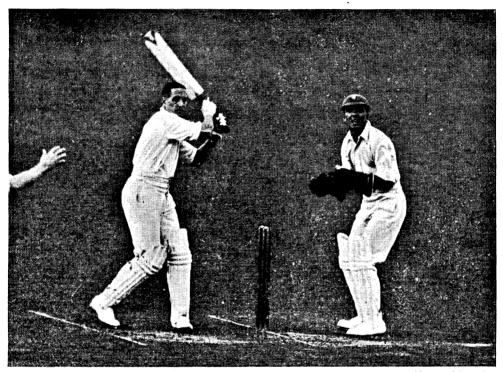
Test matches have a glamour which never seems to wane, and when an English team visits Australia again this winter, I have no doubt they will be as popular as the team of 1924–25. Almost every Test match drew record crowds, the third, which we lost by 12 runs, being one of the most exciting games I have ever played. It was really hard to lose this game, after coming so near to victory in spite of our bad luck in getting Tate and

Mr. Gilligan crocked. The only other Test which I have seen comparable to this was at the Oval when England won by one wicket, in August, 1902. England were set to make 263 to win, but lost five wickets for 48. Jessop came in and hit up 102 in less than an hour, and although this just turned the tide it was touch and go the whole time.

This game was a great contrast to the third Test during the disastrous 1920 tour in Australia, which stands out in my memory as one of the most wearisome games in which

Probably the most popular cricketer in Australia is Mr. Chapman. The crowd loved to watch his graceful hitting, and shouted, "Goit, Chappy—let's see you hit," whenever he appeared.

Tate showed them some wonderful bowling during the 1924-25 tour. He was amazingly unlucky, as again and again the ball missed the stumps by a mere fraction of an inch. I remember in the first Test Ponsford was beaten half a dozen times in the first two overs he received from Tate. He turned to me and said, "I have never



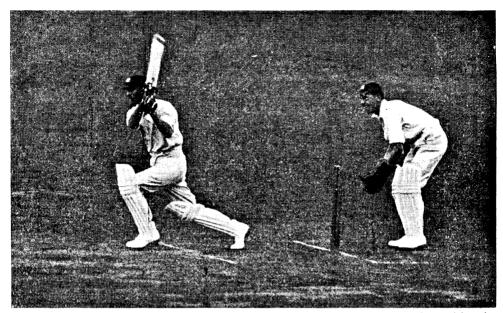
[Sport and General.

SUTCLIFFE HITS TO THE BOUNDARY.

I have played. Kellaway's innings of 147 took seven hours and the Australians made 583. Kellaway came in late in the evening, when three Australian wickets were down for 45, and was missed in the slips off his first ball. At the close he was undefeated, with 19 not out. He batted all next day. On Wednesday when he came in I remarked, "Good morning. I said good morning and good night to you yesterday, and I hope I shan't do it to-day. I'm sick of seeing you." But without a smile Kellaway replied, "I may as well stick in as long as I can." I think it was the slowest innings I have ever seen.

played such bowling in my life," and I replied, "It certainly doesn't look like it." Each time Tate beat the bat and missed the wicket he looked imploringly at the sky, but a voice from the crowd shouted, "It's no good. Heaven won't help you!"

If the 1920 tour was the most disastrous we have made in Australia, I think the 1924 tour was the unluckiest. Just when we seemed to have a grip of the game, a fielder or a bowler would be injured. The game was remarkable, as the Australians had four new balls in 130 runs! Any fast bowler will give a lot for a new ball, and although it is true that balls wear quicker



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JACK HOBBS BATTING.

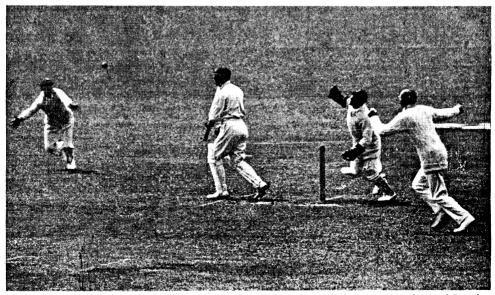
on Australian pitches, a new ball every 40 runs is ridiculous.

But, after all, it is luck that makes cricket the game it is, and in the course of time I think it pans out pretty evenly.

The 1928-29 Test matches should be very close, as the teams are well matched. I think the Australians have more than a small

chance of winning back the Ashes. It takes a good team to beat them on their own wickets.

In the course of my career behind the stumps I have met many umpires and seen not a few amusing incidents. Once, playing against Gloucestershire at Cheltenham, Razor Smith had three men out leg before.



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A few minutes later he appealed again. "Not out," replied the umpire.

"Why not?" demanded Smith.

"I've given three out already—I can't do more just yet," was the amazing reply.

In a match against Glamorganshire one of the umpires did not materialise and J. H. Brain, the Glamorgan captain, deputised. After some time W. Creber hit one of the batsmen on the leg, and before the astonished bowler could say anything, Mr. Brain shouted, "How's that? Out." He had

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HENDREN FORCING THE GAME.

to alter his decision, of course, but the man was easily out.

Another incident in a Worcestershire match. E. G. Arnold played at a ball, missed, and I whipped off a bail. Actually he had a toe on the line, but the umpire said "Not out." As Arnold did not put his foot inside the line I took off the other bail and looked at the umpire, but the verdict was still "Not out." I threw down the wicket, but he would not alter his decision, and I sent the ball back to the bowler.

"Why didn't you give him out?" I asked the umpire after the match, "His toe

was on the line and that's out." "Yes, yes," was the reply, "but I like them further out than that before I give them out."

Playing in a match against Worcestershire on another occasion, Mr. Simpson-Hayward jumped down the pitch to every ball from a slow bowler. I kept saying to myself, "The first time you miss the ball, my man, you're stumped." At last he missed and I swept off the bails with "How's that?" But I looked up and noticed that on this occasion Mr. Simpson-Hayward had not

left the crease. To my surprise and regret, the umpire signalled him out.

I apologised to Mr. Hayward afterwards and he replied, "Oh, that's all right; but do you know what the umpire said when I asked him why he had given me out? He said, 'I'm very sorry, sir, but you caught me napping, you caught me napping!"

An extraordinary incident took place during the third Test match at Johannesburg in 1909. When Zulch came in to bat he produced a small piece of paper and placed it just outside the off stump a couple of yards down the pitch. I asked him what he was doing. "If Mr. Simpson-Hayward pitches the ball outside that piece of paper I shall put my legs in front of it," he replied. This seemed hardly playing the game, and, saying that it was in my way, I picked the

paper up. Most players laugh when underhand bowling is mentioned, but Mr. Simpson-Hayward's apparently simple slows tied up first-class batsmen. They had no idea how to play him and simply kicked the ball when it pitched off the wicket.

The ways of coloured players are often strange. On the way out to Australia I saw a coloured wicket-keeper at Colombo. He was very smart and took everything, but presently, to my surprise, he said, "You's the English wicket-keeper?"

" Yes."

"I can't get hold of the ball to-day."

"I thought you were keeping very well."
"No, sah, I forgot my bird-lime. I sup-

pose you haven't any to spare?"

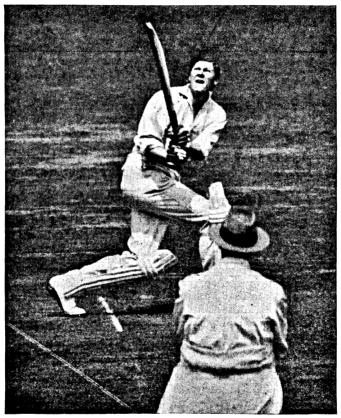
Although retired, I am still at the Oval for every match, as I have succeeded the late Fred Boyington as official umpire. Giving up first-class cricket at the Oval after all these years is heartbreaking, but a time comes when every player feels past his best and it is better that he should retire than be dropped out of the side.

The Oval, by the way, has one of the

"I don't know where I have been, sir," replied Reeves, "but it cost me seven and six for a taxi back."

I have known seven all run at the Oval, and sixes all run are not uncommon. I remember one bitter occasion in 1925 when the ball passed me and six byes were run!

The common complaint to-day is that cricket is slower than it was twenty-five years ago and that the batsmen and bowlers of the past were giants in comparison with



[Sport and General.

A. P. F. CHAPMAN HITS A SIX.

biggest boundaries in England, especially when the wicket is pitched on one side. When Surrey were playing Essex at the Oval some time ago, W. Reeves, at mid-on, had to chase a long hit, which stopped just short of the boundary. Thinking it would trickle over, Reeves took it easy, but the ball stopped. Sprinting, Reeves picked it up and returned it, but he did not hurry back.

"Oh, there you are, Reeves. Where have you been?" asked Mr. Douglas presently.

those of to-day. That is wrong. It is true that livelier wickets would brighten the game and make the bowler's task less disheartening, but the batting is as fast as it was years ago. The truth is that the strokes are made with more ease, and although there may be less furious hitting to-day, the score mounts as quickly. Those who praise the past should remember that Barlow once batted for 80 minutes without scoring and took $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to make 5 runs!



READY!

GOING TO THE DOGS • IN LAKELAND •

(With photographs by the Author)

E of the Lake District do not think very enthusiastically of hound-racing with electric hares: the idea strikes many of us as grotesque, perhaps a little dull. Perhaps the reason for our prejudice is not far to seek in that we have our own version of the sport in the shape of the hound trails which feature so largely at every Lake District sports meeting.

It is a thrilling sport, this hound trailing, the country where so many of the trails are held making a beautiful background of moor and mountain, crag, precipice, heather-clad slopes, and acre upon acre of bracken. And the hounds used for the sport fit into the picture, for they are much the same breed as the foxhounds which hunt the grim fastnesses of this wild and rugged region, animals very different from the cat-footed hound of the shires, bred for speed on lush grass-lands. Mountain hounds are more of the hare-footed type, bred for endurance as well as speed over the wild mountain country where they hunt. Lean and hard they are, sure-footed, fast amongst the The trail hounds, crags, and stout-hearted though perhaps a trifle lighter in build, have all the stamina of bone and muscle and wind of their fox-hunting relatives. There may

be, as some people state, a strain of greyhound in these trail hounds: I do not know, but at any rate they have a fine turn of speed.

The trail is laid over six to ten miles of the typical hunting country of the Lake District by trail layers, who traverse the way the hounds will follow, dragging behind them a thick pad which is kept saturated with a reeking compound of aniseed and paraffin. So powerful is the aroma of this mixture that it does not need the nose of a hound to enable one to follow the trail: the average human nose can quite easily keep along the scent, for it billows up in nauseous waves, especially if the day be fine, still, and warm.

The start is an exciting moment. The hounds are ranged in line, held with difficulty by their trainers as they plunge, baying and whimpering, and almost frantic with excitement. The flag falls, and on the instant every hound is slipped, springing forward as if flung from a catapult. Forward they speed, first in a compact body, then gradually stringing out as they reach the fell slopes, up which they gallop blithely, vanishing surprisingly soon over the summit ridge. Then comes a wait till they appear



THE STARTER AT WORK—"OFF!"



WELL AWAY.



A CLOSE FINISH.

in sight again, sometimes so far away as only to be seen with field-glasses.

All the while the time-keeper has his eye on his watch. Suddenly his hand goes up, and an official bawls loudly "It's a trail!" intimating that the hounds have been away long enough. For if they return too soon for the calculated distance over which the

trail has been laid the trail is void, as it also is if they take too long in traversing it. Sometimes in puppy trails the youngsters, excited and bewildered, do not start at all, or they come back after running a little way: this happened at Ullswater Sports this year, when nine hounds started and only one ran, so that the trail was void.

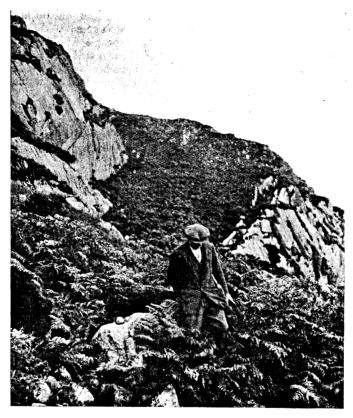


AT THE WINNING POST.

Officials checking the hounds as they come in.

But trail hounds, once they understand their business, are as keen as anybody else, though occasionally they overshoot the trail in their eagerness and lose their way. There is great excitement among their owners and trainers and the crowd generally when the hounds get within hail of the "winning post," which is generally some convenient wall or fence. Whistles and calls rend the air, and judge, time-keeper and catchers

for it is a tricky sport in which the favourite may very likely lose the trail through some quite unforeseen obstacle encountered en route, such as a cow standing in the way or a sheep fouling the trail. But it is a good sport, free from the taint of cruelty which many people object to so strongly in hare and rabbit coursing: it suits the district and it pleases and satisfies us Lakelanders. It seems likely that for many years to come we



LAYING THE TRAIL.

The trail layer sets the 6-10 mile course over moor and mountain by trailing as he goes a thick pad saturated with a mixture of paraffin and aniseed.

crouch in readiness to check in the hounds as they arrive. As their trainers take charge of them, slipping on collar, leash, and (in cold or damp weather) the hooded coat worn by trail hounds to guard them against chill, the animals are rewarded for their efforts by some dainty morsel, eagerly devoured. And so another trail is over, and those who have picked a winner hurry off in search of the bookmakers to gather in their winnings, a pleasing moment, but one which comes all too seldom to the devotee of hound trailing,

shall "go to the dogs" our own way, the perfumed path of the aniseed trail.

Those who want to witness this typical Lake District sport should consult the local press for fixtures; there is always one hound trail, often more, at every Lake District sports meeting, that at Grasmere in August being the most famous. But there are plenty of others and other places in the district where the crowds are not so great and the details of the sport are the more easily followed.

Silverpoint.

TOUCHÉ Leonard Denzell

T was the "little hour," the time when —if fortune smiles—talk becomes intimate and revealing. The light in the club smoking-room was beginning to fade. The little group round the fire, after desultory talk, had settled to the subject of the joy of repartee, the retort courteous, and of good things generally. The youngest of the party had told what he said to the chorus girl. One had told off a head waiter, another had silenced a taxi-man. There was, of course, an Army reminiscence.

"He was one of those turkey-cock chaps—old Army. He was talking about men with temporary commissions. You know the style of thing, 'These fellows think that to wear the King's uniform makes a man into a gentleman. It isn't so.'

"I said, 'Oh yes, Major, . . . personal experience?' He doubled up like a two-foot rule."

Earlom sat in his usual seat in the corner, attentive but silent, as was his way. He was a man in the early thirties, but his manner—reflective and very quiet—made him seem older. Now he spoke.

"Yes, it's very nice to say a little thing like that. Very nice and very tempting.

Not always wise perhaps."

"Oh, well . . . if we were always wise . . ."

"Exactly. . . . I once heard a man get off a very neat thing . . . and it sent him to his death."

There was a spate of exclamation and incredulity.

" No!"

"The devil!"

"Who was it?"

"You really mean that?"
"Yes, I mean every word."

"War-time, I suppose?"

"No, the piping times of peace—when these things don't happen."

"Would it be fair to ask who the man

was?"

"And would it be fair for me to tell? I

don't think it would do any harm. It's a year or two ago now. I never heard that he left any people who might be hurt. And, after all, a man has a right to kill himself. Still, I wouldn't tell the story to everyone; but all of you here knew the man and liked him."

"We knew him?"

"Knew and liked him—so his reputation's safe. It was Geoff Harding."

"Geoff! Oh, rot! He left the track at Brooklands."

"Yes, he left the track at Brooklands. But I'm going to tell you why he left it. Were any of you there when it happened?"

"Yes, I was there—and a rotten thing it

was to see."

"Then you'll remember where it was he crashed."

"I'm not likely to forget. He missed the fork and struck the grand-stand."

"That's right . . . did you ever try to think how he came to do that?"

"I don't know...it seemed simple enough. How I look at it is this—I reckon that he miscounted the laps. He was going to do another one, then—just as he got to the fork—he remembered that he'd finished the distance. He tried to get into the straight, misjudged a trifle, and so . . . crash."

"Ingenious—but a driver of Geoff's calibre had no right to miss the fork—especially when he'd driven past it hundreds of times. Also . . . on the last lap he lost his crash helmet. No, he missed the fork and went into the grand-stand . . . because he meant to."

"Because he meant to? Do you really think that?"

"I'm quite certain."

"He did seem a bit queer, I remember. Dead silent—and he used to be quite good company. Yes, there was a difference."

"Yes, he was different—and he had reason to be. I think I was his closest friend, and he talked to me more than to anyone else. Also, I was there when it happened. So I pretty well know what he went through. He was in hell. And that was because he once got off a good thing."

"Let's have it."

Earlom put down his pipe and took up the poker. He kept it in his hand all the time he was telling his story, weighing it in his hand, feeling the balance, occasionally taking little lunges at the fire. He seemed a little sorry that he had started; but having begun he continued in a quiet musing way, mostly staring at the fire.

"Poor Geoff was killed, if you remember, in August. Well, in July of that year the two of us went on a holiday together. We took one of those Norwegian Cruises—on

board the Loxley."

"The Loxley? She sank, didn't she?"
"Yes, she struck two old mines. They
must have been coupled together, for—big
as she was—they ripped out something like
a quarter of her side.

"However, that's by the way. We'd been looking forward to having a good time, and, till then, I must say we had it. We hadn't had a holiday together for years, the weather was good, and there were a lot of nice people aboard. As you know, there are all sorts on a trip like that; everybody's inclined to be friendly and it's easy to find people you like.

"Geoff, of course, was inclined to gravitate towards the plain British sporting sort, the sort who ride and golf and shoot . . . and harbour one thought at a time. I confess to a little more human curiosity. So it was

I who first got to know the girl."

"There was a girl?"

"Yes, that was the whole matter. I often wonder. . . . However, these things seem to be written."

"A girl . . . doesn't seem like old Geoff. I mean, any man can get keen on a girl . . .

but you say he killed himself."

"Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love,' eh? I never said he died for love. It was a bit more complex than that.

"But don't be misled by what I said just now. Don't think she wasn't a sportsman. She was the very finest. I only meant that she wasn't just the ordinary tennis and hockey sort. She was one of the modern kind, the kind that thinks."

"Highbrow?"

"That confounded phrase is too easy and too cheap. She was much more than that;

she was . . . a girl you could live with after the honeymoon."

"Old Earlom smitten!"

"Oh no. I liked her immensely, but that's a different thing from being smitten. No, I used simply to chip her and talk Shakespeare and the musical glasses. It was Geoff who used to go round in circles—mostly holding his head."

"Was he smitten?"

"It's hard to say. He was interested; she was a new type to him. He was exasperated: he couldn't despise her brains—and her opinions made him sick. Really, I suppose, he was."

"And the girl with him?"

"Again, I don't know—I must ask some woman about it. They were probably on the verge without knowing it. Perhaps that was why they scrapped. I'm talking of the time when we were just a holiday party together—up till the last few minutes, in fact. About the very end I've no doubt at all.

"At the beginning Geoff was a bit put off by the little set of people round her—people who talked about the latest books and plays, war and Socialism and so forth. And there were two young fellows in particular, I remember, that he wanted to murder. In a way it was like to like. She had wit and originality and they . . . well, they were two of the most stimulating young devils I've ever met—full of spirits and irreverent to a degree. They danced very well and at all hours, and they talked the most outrageous rot . . . mostly Bolshevism and psycho-

"Old Geoff wanted badly to despise these youngsters. He'd curse their ties and clothes; he'd growl about scribblers and degenerates and wonder if they washed. Once he picked up 'lounge lizards' from an American and fired that off at them. took it without a blink and ordered cocktails. Then the girl came into action and made him take her a walk along the deck. He came back looking a bit winded and didn't say a word until we were alone. It seemed that one of those lads had flown for a year over the front and the other had done a lot of gas work-going into No-Man's Land with vacuum flasks to take samples—a coldblooded business well beyond my weight; and—as Geoff owned—beyond his.

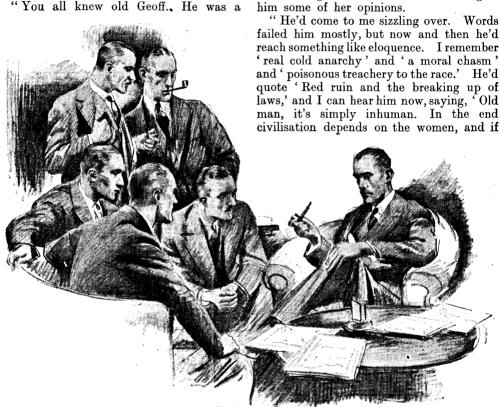
"He wanted to apologise, but the girl wouldn't let him. Said they wouldn't like it and that they'd earned the right to

pose a bit.

"All this jarred Geoff to his bedplates: but you could see that it made a difference in the way he looked at them all. He began to pay attention to them and to listen to them—to the girl especially. And they fairly made his head spin.

"They were a completely new experience to him. As you know, he was abroad until the War-in India and the East-with no opportunity to study modern developments. Not that he'd have studied them. . . .

"You all knew old Geoff.. He was a



"'And, after all, a man has a right to kill himself."

straightforward, essentially simple man. For all he was over thirty he was still a good deal of a bov."

"A dashed good fellow."

"Yes, but one of those men who grow up slowly—if they ever do. He'd a sound brain but a bit slow-moving. You'd saywe'd all say—a first-class Englishman; but just a shade wedded to, well . . . God, the King and the Public Schools and so on. . . . "

"One of the best."

"Absolutely—you couldn't indicate him better. And you couldn't say more than I'd do. But all this handicapped him in trying to size up the girl. Women were the women are like this it's good-bye to everything.'

always . . . well, rather jolly fools, to him.

He was all for protecting them from a harsh

world, and so on. Very admirable, admitted

-but a bit difficult nowadays. Of course

his manners were fine, but he had a way . . .

he didn't exactly 'Little Girl' them, but it

with the girl. She sort of indicated that

she'd seen something like him in the Zoo,

but had forgotten it's name. Then she'd give

"As you may judge, this didn't go well

was rather near that.

"Then I'd get him wild by calling her old-fashioned. He'd just shake his head

at me and go off for a drink.

"Yet, in a way she was old-fashioned. Fifteen years old can be more out of date than fifty; and she was still in the prewar suffragette stage. She'd been a youngster in 'fourteen, so she'd missed the nursing, the hard slogging, the working beside men . . . also, thank Heaven, the rather demoralising flirtations. She hadn't scrapped for the vote and she'd missed the education of the War; so, naturally, she needed ballast.

And she'd grown from a girl to a woman in the pretty rotten period just after, the time when most of us thought, 'Well, what about it . . . what did we go through hell for?' Disillusion was in the air and she—being sensitive and having a mind—caught it hadly

"And there was Geoff for her to stab and startle. These big solid sort of men seem to be a constant temptation to women in that way: and Geoff was so steady, he looked so settled and successful, possibly—to her—he looked complacent... Though—Heaven knows—that was the last thing he

was.

"Anyway, she put him through the hoop; but she would talk to me. She could talk too: some of the things she said got under the skin, I can tell you. The War was . 'the apotheosis of the Peacock.' 'Look at them, 'she'd say, 'red tabs, bits of ribbon, gold braid, haw-haw voices . . . that, and patting us on the head.' Well, we've all seen pretty foul cases, but, as I said, the men who did the job were the quiet ones who were bored stiff with the whole thing and wanted to get home to their tea. That started her on a new tack about 'warming his slippers and cooking the meals he was too inefficient to cook for himself.' The vote was 'thrown to them like a bone to a dog . . anything to keep the animal quiet.

"I did say something about the opportunities girls have nowadays. She thanked me for pointing them out. 'What shall I be, Mr. Earlom,' she'd ask, 'a musical comedy actress or a Business Woman? Shall I allure, or work?' 'Well,' I'd say, 'you have the choice, and we haven't.' She smiled at that; but she went on, 'Shall I be paid because I have a pretty face . . . or shall I compete with you men—skill against skill—and be knocked on the head because the conditions aren't equal?' She could put things with force; what she said you remembered.

"She had something to say about capital, and I admit there was sense in it. As she said, women don't have capital: the oldestablished businesses go to the sons, the new money is used by syndicates of men. Business is men's affair and women get the crumbs. 'Look at me,' she'd say, 'I've brains and education. What's in front of me? . . . Teacher in a 'select' school,

doctor in an institution, a useful civil servant . . . second class.'

"'Yes,' I'd say, 'almost as exciting as being a bank clerk or a postmaster.' She

admitted that we had second-class jobs to do, but maintained that women's jobs were always second class. Then she went on another slant. 'If I were a fool I'd have eight years' fool fun and then my slippers. If I'm anything else I'm chucked away.'

"I plucked up my courage to mention marriage and children and she just said, 'Oh, indeed!' She amplified a little. 'Yes, we crack our skulls swotting, we work double tides at a profession or a business . . . then the age-old madness takes us and we drop it all for some fool of a man. We ask for life and are given the suburbs.'

"I was sorry for her, although I reckoned that she'd get over it. Of course she didn't

know what she wanted."

"No woman does."

"Does any man...really? I doubt it—but we've become resigned. She had just come into her kingdom and had found it, well...as we generally do find our

kingdoms.

"I liked the girl and I could see a good deal of what was troubling her; but Geoff suffered. Even though she felt that I was sympathetic she still assailed me pretty heavily. For him she had no mercy at all. So you can see that my 'old-fashioned' didn't go down with him. I can see him now. He'd dance till two o'clock; then he'd get into his bunk, light up, and take it out of me.

"'Old-fashioned,' he'd say; 'man, she's

hardly proper.'

"That touched me up, for she was the nicest-minded creature stepping—and I told him so.

"He'd go on, 'Huh! You should see the books she reads . . . some of these foreign johnnies. I wouldn't throw them down a decent sink.'

"'Yes,' I'd say to him, 'but she tells you that she reads them. She doesn't play the sweet innocent or the vicar's daughter. You must make some allowances for youthful swank.'

"Then he'd give a sort of groan. 'But Heavens, man... her own theories! She wants her own place and a latch-key and unlimited drinks and so on... cocaine, for all I know!'

"I could see that she had been trying him high, but I had to stick up for her. I pointed out that such things weren't unknown with our sex and that justice should prevail though the sky fell. 'It's all a matter of justice,' I'd say. Then he'd call me a cold-blooded devil and turn over in his bunk.

"Yes, she was giving him a hard row to hoe and he couldn't leave it. He was fascinated and horrified; and he seemed to have an idea that he could save her. In return she called him 'Uncle' and said she admired his courage in trying to uphold the ruins of the patriarchal system. 'Admirable, but pathetic—like the Swiss Guard.'

Then she'd beat him at swimming, and that

turned him edgewise.

"And once, I'll admit, she wasn't fair. As it happened it was the last day the old Loxley was afloat. There was an awfully jolly kid on board, about three years old. Geoff was playing with her that morning; chasing her about the deck; picking her up and tossing her about, then chasing her again. They were having the biggest fun and at the end of one of their rushes—just as he'd caught her—they barged into the girl. Geoff was jolly happy about it all and he said to the girl, 'Isn't she the prettiest thing going?'

"She flared out at him. 'Pretty!' she said. 'Pretty! You men are all the same. You can't think of anything but toys. And these toys... you never think they're mostly pain and worry and heartbreak... for us.' Then she caught my eye and calmed down a bit. She made a sort of half apology that didn't help much. 'Of course they appeal to certain sentimental types—and those we have always with

us.'

"That took him between wind and water. He put the youngster down and walked the deck for half an hour.

"He didn't turn up for the dance that evening. About half-way through the girl came up to me and said, 'Where's Father Christmas?'

"'Father Christmas?' said I.

"'Yes, your friend who's so fond of children—if they happen to be pretty and clean.' I told her he was in the bar, 'amongst folk who were a bit human.' She said, 'You mean this morning?' 'Yes,' said I, and she went on, 'Tell him that I know that I was an utter beast, but it's sickening being a woman.'

"By great ill-fortune I never delivered that message. I had rather the idea that she might do so herself. I hove him out of the bar and piloted him to where she was sitting. He bowed to her and she was just getting up from her seat when there was an appalling crash and a burst of flame forward. Then it was dead quiet and we all looked at each other. I heard one of those lads say

'some jazz effect.' After that the party

broke up, as you might say.

"The syren started hooting; we heard the boatswain's pipe, and the men began to make the boats ready. Some of the passengers went forward to look at the damage, some made for the boats, but most of them started for their cabins. Geoff turned to the girl and told her to cut off and put on all the clothes she could and not to forget her money. I heard her say, 'Thanks, I'll meet you here afterwards.' Then she hurried away and we went off to get our overcoats.

"When we'd got our coats we came out on the after-deck where we'd been dancing. It was pretty quiet—most of the people were making for the boats. We could see, however, that there wasn't much in that, for the men, anyway. The ship was obviously done for, some of the port boats were smashed, those to starboard would never be launched—the heel of the ship was already bearing them inboard. It looked like 'Birkenhead Drill' for us, so we got out our pipes and leaned back against the rail. There was nothing else to do; there were plenty of sailors to get the boats away and we should only have hindered.

"Geoff just said, 'Finish, old man,' but I thought the wireless might save us yet. He didn't think that. 'Too far North,' he

said.

"We were still arguing, more for the sake of talking than anything else, when the girl came out on to the deck. I can see her now. As she stepped forward she faced a cluster of lights that threw her up against the darkness of the alley-way. They lit her up as if she were coming on to a stage . . . and

she looked like a princess.

"She came over to us and asked whether the boats were being lowered yet—about as much excited as if she were asking for a taxi. We told her that they were getting away sharply and that she'd better hurry forward. She asked us what we were waiting for. Geoff and I both felt a bit embarrassed at that, but one of us managed to put the situation somehow. She didn't hurry away; she stayed there, looking thoughtful—and then Geoff got off his good thing.

"He stood there with his pipe in one hand and the other in his pocket. 'Well, Miss Weston,' he said, 'you're a bit keen on our rights and privileges. I suppose you're not thinking of coming down with us?'

"Now here, you fellows, I'm in a difficulty. I want you to understand exactly the spirit

TOUCHÉ.

in which Geoff said that. If he'd meant it in any sense seriously-if there had been the barest suggestion of a sneer in it—he would have pretty well deserved what he got. Not everything-no man would have deserved that—but some punishment. But he didn't. All along, you must remember, that to Geoff the women were absolutely safe. The whole tradition represented by 'Women and children first, was so completely part of him, so much in the blood, that he felt quite safe in saying what he did. He couldn't conceive it's being taken as anything but what it was. And it was . . . a gesture. I wish you could have seen him, then you would have understood. He was just like a man talking in a ballroom. He was carrying off a bad and difficult situation with a light touch, with a jest—and a jest entirely in the spirit of their many encounters. They had always sparred and he was sparring to the last.

"But it was more than sparring to the girl. She met his eye very straight, saying nothing. After some time she gave a little nod—to herself, as it were—and spoke.

"' Touché, Mr. Harding,' she said.

"Then he saw that he'd made a mistake and he tried to cover it up. He gave a sort of half-laugh and said, 'Anyway, it can't be done, you know. The officers see to that.'

"One of the officers came up and told her that the last boats were getting away. Then she said something that surprised me: she asked him if she had time to get her jewelcase. His jaw dropped a bit, but he said she could do it if she hurried and she went off towards her cabin. He threw up his hands—you don't often see a man actually do that—muttered 'these women' and went off, leaving us to think things over.

"Geoff gave a sigh. 'Thank God! she scared me for a minute.' After that we

went very quiet.

"That's the most vivid impression I have of it—the deathly quietness. The shuffling sound from about the boats seemed to belong to another world: in more ways than one it had nothing to do with us. We leant against the rail and watched the last boat lowered. The falls lengthened and lengthened until at last she touched the water, cast off and went out of sight. It didn't take long. For all we were in high latitudes it was pretty dark, the sky being heavily overcast. After that there was nothing else to do but to watch the water creeping up to us and feel our bodies getting heavier against the rail as the list grew.

"Then we both had the worst shock of our lives. Someone behind us said, 'Have either of you men got a cigarette?' When we heard that I doubled over the rail—absolutely limp—while Geoff must have jumped a clear inch from the deck. Because it was the girl!

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"She was magnificent. She stood leaning against the cant of the deck and she said, 'I'm not showing off; I really want a smoke.' She hadn't any jewel-case.

"Geoff got out his cigarettes. He could hardly unbutton his coat and he nearly dropped the case. She took one and he struck a light. I saw both their faces clearly in the light of the match. They were like masks.

"When her cigarette was alight Geoff turned and threw the match overboard. Then he turned back to her and spoke quietly but very clearly. 'We have another privilege, Miss Weston—to save them, if we

can, from their follies.'

"He left her and started to make his way across the deck. By now it wasn't too easy, but he made a sort of jump to the upperdeck companion and from there clawed his way to the after-hatch. This was fitted with a grating and he wrenched off a section. I knew that he was a strong man; but he brought that grating away as if he were lifting a doormat. He collected one or two life-buoys and some rope and made a sort of raft, lashing the buoys to the corners of the grating. He worked very quickly, and in a little while he had the whole thing finished and ready to slide down to the rail.

"While he was doing this I was looking at the girl. She had forgotten everything but Geoff. She was watching him in a lost, rapt sort of way . . . as you'll sometimes see a woman looking at her little boy when he's playing. She was completely happy. He was working in his quick, neat way and you could see that every movement he made

was a separate pleasure to her.

"He slithered the thing across the deck and heaved it on to the rail, about level with her waist. Then he lashed her to it. A pretty lashing it was too, a loop round the waist, a knot on the shoulder—so that she would be held up—and enough slack for her to climb on to the raft.

"The girl stood quite still, so that he should have every chance to make a good job of the thing. She remained quiet until he'd finished: then she placed her hand on his shoulder and said, 'My dear, may I not join my comrades?'



head on her breast and she folded it in her arms.

"Then the ship took a sudden plunge by the head and we were all in the sea.

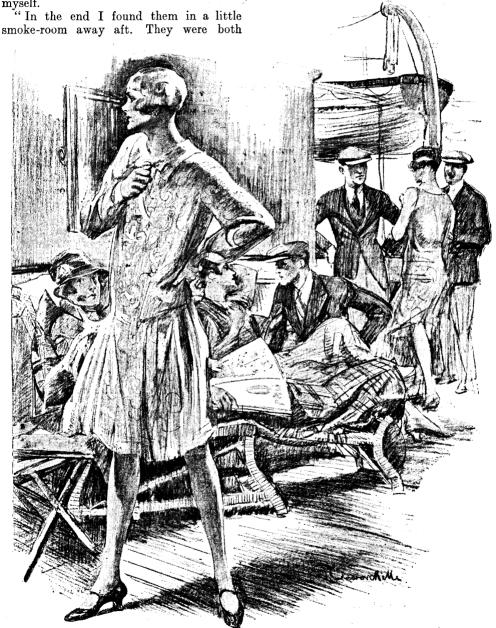
"The next few hours were bad—very bad. We were all sucked down by the boat and when we came up—those of us who did—we were by another boat that had caught our S.O.S.

"I lay where they put me for most of the day—as you may imagine—not good for much. But by night-time I felt fairly right; so I got up and started to see what I could find out about things. Most of the Loxley's people were below, but some were about—very quiet for the most part—though some of

them were talking about it as if they couldn't stop . . . which, I suppose, was about true. It was heartrending, but I didn't take much notice. I was too anxious about Geoff and the girl. I felt that I didn't dare to ask anyone about them but must find out for myself.

the settee looking like one of the damned. He was one of the damned.

"He just said 'Hello, old chap'—no more—and I sat down by him. We were there all night. After an hour or so I fell asleep—I couldn't help it; but I doubt if



"She flared out at him. 'Pretty!' she said. 'Pretty! You men are all the same. You can't think of anything but toys.'"

there, the girl covered with Geoff's wet coat and Geoff sitting in the corner of

Geoff shut his eyes. In the morning I got him away, with the help of the doctor, and made him eat. Two very decent fellows gave up their cabin to us and finally I got him into a bunk where he slept like a

log.
"I asked the doctor how it happened that the girl's body had been picked up. told me that all the dead they found they left in the sea but that the girl they'd had to take aboard. As he put it, 'It was either that or shipping a madman.

"The run home was like a bad dream. What made it really like a dream was the ghastly resemblance to the trip on the other boat. There were Geoff and I sharing a cabin; and there was Geoff sitting up in his bunk and talking about the girl. The con-

trast was awful beyond words.

"He'd lie brooding for perhaps an hour; then he'd start cursing himself. couldn't I hold my cursed tongue? Why wasn't I struck dumb? I ought never to speak again.' He stopped once in the middle of a talk with me to say, 'She didn't drown, you know, she died of the cold,' and he shuddered so that he shook the bunk.

"Another time he quoted the Bible. 'Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar'... and again it was a tag from Hood:

> 'Evil is wrought By want of thought
> As well as want of heart,'

but said that it ought to be turned round to point the real moral. 'The rogues can't compare with the fools when it comes to

doing harm.'

"Again it was despair at the whole awful misconception that had caused the tragedy. He would say, 'Who could have dreamt it? Everybody knows that the women are saved . . . It's absolutely understood . . . I couldn't think that she'd take it that way ... nobody could ... I couldn't have said it if it hadn't been for that . . .'

"I couldn't attempt to comfort him. I didn't try. The only thing I could do was 'Yes,' he said, to say how fine she'd been. 'we all knew in the War that the best were

always killed. . . .

"And I told him to remember one thing —she was happy at the end. 'Happy!

he said, '... she's dead!'

"I remember well the last thing he said of her; for after that he was silent—dangerously silent. He came over to my bunk and gripped the edge as if he'd break it. 'Man,' he said, 'what a mother she would have made.

"Then I saw them both as I had never seen them before. He had known her at her very best and had understood her as I could never do—for all I'd tried. He was a man of simple soul, and, at the end, he was vouchsafed the wisdom of the simple.

"He never mentioned her again—to me. He never spoke of her at all . . . except when he saw her people at Hull. They thanked him for trying to save her. He accepted their thanks . . . and when it was over he joined me on the train, looking

ten years older.

"After we got home I saw very little of him, but I heard that he was tuning up his racer. I knew that he had his eye on the hundred miles in his class, and I was glad to hear of this. Nothing could comfort him, of course; but I thought that the distraction was the only thing that could do him any good. Now I can see that this was characteristic of him-of his instinct to do things properly and in good order. He meant to kill himself, but cleanly and without talk afterwards.

"The night before it happened he telephoned to ask if I could have dinner with him. He wouldn't have it here-which struck me afterwards as significant. I saw why—he wanted us to have it alone. We went to Timsons'—a bit late—and took a table in a corner.

"We had a very pleasant little meal. I was awfully glad to see him again and you can guess I watched him pretty closely to see if he was getting over it. I couldn't guess at all, but he seemed almost the old Geoff. He wasn't cheerful, of course; but he'd lost the air he'd had of literally hating himself—of being unable to endure living with himself for another day. There was something about him . . . as if he'd made a decision and achieved a sort of peace.

"We talked of the attempt he meant to make on the record. He said he thought he'd break it—and I really think he tried. Then we went on, as fellows will, recalling old times—school days, holidays together, things that had happened in the War. . . . This wasn't quite like him; he hardly ever spoke of the past. He was always looking forward to good times to come. And every now and then he would stop and look straight in front of him, completely lost in his thoughts. Once he looked me right in the face for several seconds without seeing me

"Knowing what he'd been through, I didn't think a lot of this at the time. But afterwards, in bed, I did. I recalled all these little differences and I remembered how he'd parted from me. He shook hands and wished me good night. Then he said, 'Don't come down to Brooklands to-morrow, old chap.' I was a bit surprised—for I generally went down to see him race, and he liked me to—but I said nothing. After that he shook both my hands, gripping them hard, and got into his taxi.

"Then—in the small hours—it came to me. All these things rushed into my mind in one shock—like a shout in the ear—and I knew that he meant to kill himself.

"So I went down to Brooklands. I had

some idea of trying to stop him, but when I got there he'd nearly finished the run. I saw him finish the run. . . and helped to pick him up. He was my best friend . . . and I thanked God that he was dead."

When Earlom had finished there was quietness for a space. Someone ordered drinks; but the banal words seemed in no way a discord. The group was held by common memories and the spell of tragedy. No pledge was given but, in silence, honour was paid to the dead.

PENNIES FOR JOY.

GRIM Poverty may stalk a street
With Want to watch him pass,
But almost any house can have
A tiny plot of grass.

And seldom is a yard so small But somewhere there will be A silver space to hold the slim Glad wonder of a tree;

The dinginess of weathered boards

May take new light—and shine—

For every little house can have

A morning glory vine,

A sapling and a flower seed,
A penny spent—or two—
And barren soil will rift and let
A blinding beauty through.

Oh, any house where water is May be so clean and sweet That Poverty will hurry by Ashamed to stalk that street.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

AMATEUR KNIGHT • • ERRANT • •

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY F. H. WARREN

HEN Charles Antony Mostyn was invited by his aunt and uncle to stay with them for a week, he received the invitation with mixed feelings. For Charles Antony Mostyn was just seventeen—an age at which one naturally shrinks from aunts and uncles. Aunts and uncles are apt to labour under the delusion that at seventeen one is still a child; and visits to them consist, as a rule, of one unbroken succession of humiliations.

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Antony, though he had no very clear remembrance of this aunt and uncle, had little hope that they would differ from other aunts and uncles. They would tell him that he had grown a lot lately, ask him why he put so much grease on his hair, look with disapprobation at his suit, and make rude comments on the colour of his ties. They would be quite unaware of the fact that a man who is in his first term at a University is a finished man of the world and should be treated as such.

Considering this rooted distrust of aunts and uncles in general, it may seem strange that Antony accepted the invitation. Antony was a romantist. He had devoured much sensational fiction and it had inevitably coloured his view of life. He cherished the happy conviction that anything might happen to anyone at any time. He would often sit in a London General omnibus staring at his fellow-passengers and speculating upon their identity. He generally upon quite inadequate grounds—put them down as disguised international crooks, secret service spies, detectives, foreign princes travelling incognito, or escaping criminals. Though his life, so far, had been singularly barren of startling events, he was sustained always by a conviction that some great adventure lurked for him just round the corner, and he could not help thinking quite impersonally and impartially that he was a very suitable subject for a great adventure to happen to. During his reading of romantic literature, he had made a careful study of the character and bearing of the heroes to whom adventures were as normal as influenza or lost collar-studs, and he felt with a certain modest pride that when the time came he would not disgrace the standard they set him.

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Up to now, as I have said, nothing much had happened. No beautiful damsel in distress had appealed to him for help. He had never been mistaken for a famous criminal and dragged into the vortex of a complicated plot. He had never been attacked by ruffians and gagged and bound because of some letters which had been entrusted to him by a masked stranger. But he never ceased to hope.

All this sounds a strange reason for accepting an invitation to stay with an aunt and uncle, but it is not as strange as it sounds. Antony felt that the neighbourhood of his own home had been pretty well exhausted. For miles around there lived respectable and innocuous families, no member of any one of which could, by any stretch of imagination, be conceived as providing any excitement of any sort. Antony had watched them carefully-and even Antony, incurable optimist as he was, saw no hope in them. But the neighbourhood in which his aunt and uncle lived was unexplored territory. Anyone might live there. Anything might happen there. He looked forward with a certain excitement even to the journey, because of a story he had read the week before. The hero. who was going on a journey by train, got into an empty carriage and various other people got into the same carriage at intervals before the train started, and it turned out that all these apparently unconnected people were members of a secret gang who

kidnapped the man because he was the double of a man who—well, it was too complicated to explain, but it was very, very exciting.

Antony had no hopes that anything so exciting as that would happen to him. had learnt by experience that real life is grudging of such thrills. But still, the incontestible fact remained—anything might happen to anyone, anywhere. It was disappointing, therefore, to have only one other occupant of the carriage, because, despite the reasonings of common sense, Antony hadn't been able to help hoping for the gang. He was so much occupied in watching the door for the gang that until the train actually moved out of the station he had hardly looked at his fellowtraveller. When he did so he blinked and started.

She was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen in his life. As the fact slowly dawned on him, he began to blush. Antony would have given all the money he possessed in the world (which was three pounds, three shillings and one penny-halfpenny) to be rid of this hateful habit of blushing. It was one of his greatest troubles. He felt that it gave people quite a wrong impression of him, made him seem young and inexperienced, instead of a man of the world and a potential hero. His blush on this occasion was worse than usual. It spread up slowly from his neck to his brow. Even his ears were burning. And suddenly she looked up and caught his eyes fixed on her. His blush deepened till he felt that he must be almost black. His embarrassment took the nature of a panic. He hurriedly took up the newspaper with which he had fortunately provided himself, tore it open and dived into it with the effect almost of a rabbit taking refuge in its burrow. For a time he hid behind it, unaware that he was holding it upside down. His ears were still burning. What must she think of him, sitting and staring at her like that, and, worse still, blushing as if he were a mere boy? It was a horrible thought to Antony that she should misjudge him and think him a mere boy and not know that, in imagination at any rate, he had proved himself of the stern stuff of which heroes are made. His blush was mercifully beginning to fade. The fact that he was holding his newspaper upside down slowly dawned on him and he hastily reversed it. Then he nerved himself to look at her again. To his relief she wasn't looking at him.

She was looking out of her window. Probably she hadn't noticed that his paper was upside down. He felt that the thing to be done now, at all costs, was to nullify that first unfortunate impression of youth and inexperience which his blush must have made on her. He lowered his paper. coughed to attract her attention, and stared out of his window with an abstracted frown for a few moments. Then, his features still composed to what he fondly imagined to be a stern expression of deep thoughtfulness, he fixed his eye upon the paper and continued to frown. He was obviously a man of affairs, a world-weary financial magnate perhaps, on whose smile or frown hung the destiny of thousands. It was only when he noticed her trying to see upon what item of his paper he was bending such a searching look that he discovered that his eyes were fixed with that stern and thoughtful frown upon "Aunt Catherine's Cookery Notes." With a gesture of disgust he crumpled the paper and put it on to one side, taking a temporary refuge in the passing scenery.

But no sooner had he flung aside the paper than he regretted it. It had been a refuge. It had afforded opportunity for his man-of-the-world expression. As he gazed out of the window he became painfully aware that he was looking more and more self-conscious. His features were getting out of hand. Despite all his efforts, his expression was becoming sheepish, and the more he tried not to look sheepish, the more sheepish he looked. Then he remembered that he had a letter in his pocket, and feeling like a man whose life has been saved, he took it out and began to read it. A letter is almost as good as a newspaper in the opportunity it affords of effective facial expressions. It was, in reality, a letter from his married sister thanking him for a handkerchief which he had sent her as a birthday present the week before, but the girl opposite, of course, could not know that. She would naturally conclude that it was something very momentous, calling for abstruse calculations and deep thought. He frowned at it, he scowled, he compressed his very youthful lips into unnaturally tense lines. He seemed to be weighing up the pros and cons of some weighty decision. He read the letter again and again, he made notes upon it as for possible answers, he drummed with his fingers upon the window arm-rest, he put down the letter and let his eyes rest with a speculative frown upon the fields that flew by outside.

Then the train gave a lurch, her handbag fell upon the floor and he darted across the carriage to pick it up. She smiled at him.

"Thank you so much," she said. "These trains are awful, aren't they?"

to her. He found her unexpectedly easy to talk to. It didn't seem to take hours to get to wherever you want to get to any more. It seemed now a matter of seconds only. Antony glanced in dismay at the stations as they flashed by one after the other. He wished that it were one of those railways in foreign countries one read about—the Trans-



"Then he nerved himself to look at her again."

He sat down opposite her, blushing and beaming fatuously.

"Yes," he said, "they jolly well are, aren't they?"

"It takes hours to get wherever you want to get, doesn't it?" said the girl.
"Yes, doesn't it?" agreed Antony.

"Hours."
She had blue eyes and red-gold hair and a mischievous smile. Antony began to talk

Siberian Railway or the Californian Railway—where one stayed in a train for weeks and weeks and weeks. This train seemed suddenly to have put on speed and to be shooting through the air, where before it had merely crawled. He was dimly aware that he wasn't making quite the impression he'd meant to make. Occasionally he remembered to put on his man-of-affairs frown and to use an expression which might

be taken to imply that he was a financial magnate or head of Scotland Yard or something like that (Antony was very truthful and never actually said that he was a financial magnate, or head of Scotland Yard), but he could not help also using expressions which implied equally clearly that he was in his first term at Cambridge. He told her all about the Rugger match last term that they'd won by such a narrow shave. He told her about his dog that had caught four rats the same day, and what an awful fright he had last Christmas when it got distemper. He told her what to do if ever her dog got distemper. Of course, she still might think him a financial magnate. There was no reason why a financial magnate should not play Rugger or keep a dog, but he was beginning not to care what she thought he was. Even when she said:

"You're a poor traveller, aren't you?"

and he said:

"No. Why?" and she said:

"I thought you must be, somehow. When you were over at the other window you looked just as if you were going to be sick. I felt so sorry for you."

Even when she said that he did not feel offended. Instead he felt intoxicated by her sympathy and kindness. She'd been watching him. She'd cared. She'd been sorry for him because she thought he was

going to be sick. . . .

They were discovering a most remarkable similarity in their tastes. They both liked duck better than any other sort of meat, and peas better than any other sort of vegetable, and trifle better than any other sort of sweets. (Antony stifled an impulse to tell her that he preferred trifle without alcohol. He was sure that she would not respect him so much if she knew that he preferred trifle without alcohol.) They both liked open cars better than saloon cars and thought that motor-cycles were really heaps more fun than either. He told her about his motor-cycle—it did sixty simply with looking at.

And then . . . it was absurd. It seemed only a few seconds since he'd got into the train, but he was at his destination. There were his uncle and aunt on the platform, waving their hands to him in welcome. After that blissful journey with the most beautiful girl in the world he couldn't help looking at his aunt and uncle with rather critical eyes. He hoped that she wouldn't judge him by them. They came up to the

carriage door at once and began to ask him questions in loud voices, about his mother and father and brothers and sisters. His aunt kissed him. She was wearing a dreadful hat. His uncle said:

"Well, my boy, getting on well at college? Working hard, I hope."

Antony blushed violently and tried to look detached and as if they were very distant relatives many times removed. They bore him off between them. He glanced back wistfully, hoping that his goddess would look at him and read his undying love and devotion in his eyes. But she was standing with her back to him getting some things

down from the rack, and so she missed his

eloquent farewell glance.

That evening Antony sat in his bedroom with his diary open before him. Antony kept a diary because he meant to be one of the world's famous men, and he thought that his diary would be of interest to posterity. The thought of posterity made the writing of it no easy matter to Antony. He had always to form his entries so that they should be, if not exactly impressive, at least not lacking in dignity. He generally wrote the entries on rough paper first and edited them very stringently. There must not be anything in them that might make posterity smile. To-night he wrote on a piece of rough paper:

"Come to spend week with Aunt Maggie and Uncle Frank. A most beautiful girl in the same train. We got on very well indeed together. She was simply topping."

He read it critically, then shook his head in disapproval. It sounded young and undignified. He altered it several times before he got it to his satisfaction. Then he wrote very neatly:

"Come to spend week with Mrs. Shrewsbury, my mother's sister, and her husband. Had very interesting conversation on journey with very beautiful and intelligent girl who happened to be travelling in the same carriage."

Antony's aunt and uncle do not really come into the story. They were a well-meaning but unimaginative couple, who realised Antony's worse fears. His aunt invariably addressed him as "dear," they referred to his "holidays" instead of his "vacation"; they did, to his unspeakable horror, actually say that he had grown a lot

lately and they laughed in good-natured, but to Antony most humiliating, ridicule at his cherished plus-fours.

into a lane which was a short cut to the main road. He was thinking of his fellow-traveller of yesterday. There was a smile, tender



On the morning after his arrival Antony set off for a walk. He left the garden by the back gate, because the back gate led reminiscent and—if one is to be quite honest—slightly fatuous upon his lips. Then quite suddenly the smile faded, his colour

deepened, and a look of dismay came over his face.

There at the back gate of the house next

"I'm staying with my aunt next door." She glanced up at the chimneys of Antony's aunt's house.



door to his aunt's stood his travelling companion of yesterday dressed in a print

dress, cap and apron, shaking
mats. For a moment he was
stupefied by horror . . . then, still blushing,
he raised his hat very politely and stopped.

"Good-morning," he said. "May I—er—may I do that for you?"

She looked at him and smiled quite unabashed.

"Hello," she said, "is it you?"

"Yes, it's me," said Antony ungrammatically.

"Where have you sprung from?"

"Oh, her!" she said.

"Yes," he agreed simply, "her."

He had taken the mat from her and was shaking it over both of them with every evidence of good-will, but with a fine disregard of the direction of the wind. She spoke chokingly through a mouthful of dust

"You might stand so that the wind will take it away from us," she suggested. "It's an acquired taste, dust, and it takes a long time to acquire it."

"I'm so sorry," he apologised, beginning to shake it spasmodically in the opposite direction. After a few moments he added:

"How long do you go on shaking them?"

"Till dust stops coming out."

"It doesn't ever seem to stop coming out and the wind seems to keep changing.

"Well, I dare say it's all right now."

"Perhaps it is just fluff that's coming out now," he suggested.
"Doesn't it taste any different?"

He swallowed critically.

"Yes," he said at last, "I think it does." "Then I expect it's just fluff," she

He put it on one side.

"Have you any more to do?"

She pointed to a pile of the mats on the garden path.

"All these," she said.

With a workmanlike air he took up the first. She took up the second. They stood talking and shaking dust over each

"I think I'm gradually acquiring the taste," he said once meditatively. "It doesn't taste half as nasty as it used to."

Tactfully they did not mention her low

calling.

They talked instead about dogs and motorcycles and cinemas. She seemed to know a good deal about cinemas. And upstairs from the landing window his aunt, horrorstruck, was drawing her husband's attention to the amazing spectacle of their guest shaking mats in their next-door neighbour's garden with their next-door neighbour's maid.

"He's queer," said his aunt. "I've always said there was something queer about him."

Below, the next-door neighbour's maid was suddenly summoned indoors by a shrill

"You'd better go now," she said quite composedly to Antony. So Antony went.

He walked down the back lane to the main road in a maze of rapture. He felt

like King Cophetua.

She was only a little skivvy, but he was going to marry her. He was going to raise her from her lowly position to the heights to which he himself would ultimately attain. (Antony had an almost Napoleonic faith in his destiny.) He began to rehearse to himself the scene in which he would lay his heart and hand at her feet. He would have to wait, of course, till he'd finished his college course and got a job—the job that was the first step on the ladder that was to lead him to such dazzling heights. he'd go to her. She'd be scrubbing floors or cleaning windows or shaking mats. He'd take her hand and he'd say-suddenly he caught sight of the reflection of his face in a shop window. There were two great black streaks of dust down both cheeks and another on his chin. He gazed at it in incredulous horror for a minute, then turned and hastened back to his aunt's house.

That evening he sat before his diary for nearly half an hour scowling, and chewing the end of his fountain-pen. Finally he

wrote:

"Discovered that the beautiful and intelligent girl who travelled down with me yesterday is staying at the next house. Had another interesting conversation with her to-day."

He felt that any fuller version of the affair. any mention of her vocation in life, might give posterity a totally wrong impression of him or of her or of both.

He hadn't any time to pursue his courtship the next day. His uncle took him out for a walk in the morning and his aunt took him out to tea in the afternoon.

And the day after that his aunt announced calmly at lunch:

"Mrs. Brown's maid's gone."

Antony looked up in horror. Mrs. Brown, he knew, was the name of the next-door neighbour.

"Gone!" he gasped.

His aunt ignored him and went on talking to her husband.

Only been there a day," she said, "and gone already. A flighty piece, I could see

"Why did she go?" said her husband. "Stealing, I expect," said Antony's aunt. "I know that she came without a reference."

Antony was aghast. He felt like King Cophetua suddenly bereft of his beggar maid. It was terrible to have his future wife snatched from under his very nose like this. As he chewed the rather tough cold meat that formed the pièce de résistance of the lunch (as a hostess his aunt was proving rather disappointing. There had been far too much cold meat and there hadn't been duck or peas or trifle once) he laid his plans very carefully. He must search the world till he found her. He must confront Mrs. Brown, demand from her an explanation of her outrageous conduct, tell her what he thought of her, then start on his search. Directly after lunch he steeled his heart, screwed up his courage and set off to Mrs. Brown's. Very determinedly he walked up to her front door and knocked. He was going to say coldly, sternly—very coldly, very sternly, "I wish to know upon what grounds you have dismissed the young lady who was in your employ." He was going to say it so coldly, so sternly, that Mrs. Brown would quail beneath his glance as she faltered out her inadequate explanation. He would then . . . The door opened, and Mrs. Brown stood on the threshold. She was very big and very fierce-looking and evidently she did not like Antony. Perhaps she had seen him shaking mats with her maid. She glared at him and said:

" Well?"

Antony blinked and swallowed. What was he going to say? "I wish to know upon what grounds you have dismissed the young lady who was in your employ." He tried to say the words, but they wouldn't come.

Mrs. Brown was still glaring at him balefully. She said again:

" Well ? "

He resisted a sudden inclination to turn tail and flee in headlong panic. Smiling a sickly, ingratiating smile, he said:

"Pardon me, but my aunt would be obliged if you would be so good as to tell her the correct time. All her clocks have stopped."

She snapped, "Half-past three," and slammed the door.

And that night Antony's aunt said to her husband:

"You know, he is queer. He called at Mrs. Brown's this afternoon and told her that all my clocks had stopped. Well, can you beat that for sheer queerness?"

Antony's visit was over and he was at home again. He had not forgotten his mysterious lady-love, but—it is a painful confession to have to make about one's hero, but one must be truthful—he was not any more faithful than are the majority of boys—I mean men—of seventeen, and since his return from his aunt's he had met a new friend of his youngest sister's who was—well, who really was the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen in his life. He was now engaged in looking for some little offering for her birthday which, without being too expensive, would prove to her the richness of his love. He had gone to one of the larger London stores and had already wandered about disconsolately for several hours, trying to find something which

should cost about ten bob but should look as if it cost a quid, when—suddenly he saw her again, the girl of the train, the girl of the back door and the mats, the girl whom only a few weeks ago he had meant to marry. He was just waiting till his blush should have subsided before he greeted her, whenthe amazing thing happened. She was bending over some boxes of goods on the counter and he distinctly saw her take something out of one of the boxes and slip it into her bag. The horrible truth dawned on him. She was shop-lifting. He remembered that his aunt had said she had gone to Mrs. Brown without a character. remembered that his aunt had hinted that she'd been dismissed for stealing. He stood watching her, transfixed by horror.

She'd turned away now to go to another department and she was carrying a bag that evidently was bulging with things she'd slipped into it. He followed her, his mind a maze of conflicting emotions. He must rescue her from her life of crime. He must. of course, forget his sister's friend and marry It was his plain duty. he saw that he was not the only person following her. A woman shopwalker was following her, keeping an unswerving eve upon her trim, gaily-dressed figure. It was, of course, a detective. Antony knew that these shops always kept women detectives to track down shop-lifters. With quickly beating heart he followed the two of them. The girl in front was obviously unaware that she was being followed. She tripped happily along clasping her bag of plunder. The detective behind held a note-book in her hand. It was plain that she had written down in it the proofs of the girl's guilt -the articles she had stolen, the departments she had stolen them from, and the times at which she had stolen them. had a grim look upon her face as she shadowed her prey. Antony remembered from newspapers that they always did that—just calmly watched them pinching things in one department after another and then arrested them on the doorstep as they were going out. Beastly trick. He wanted to warn the girl, but was afraid that that would only precipitate the crisis. . . .

She was stopping now over some trays of gloves. She had put her bag of booty down conveniently near her and was fingering the gloves in the tray, preparatory, Antony knew, to slipping them into her bag. And then—his eyes and his mouth opened wide with horror. The detective

was approaching her, note-book in hand. She was beginning to speak.

"Excuse me, madam-"

Quick as thought, Antony acted. He seized the bag which stood near him and disappeared with it into the crowd. Neither had seen him. He had saved her. He had removed the incriminating evidence. She would deny the charge and they would have no proof. They couldn't possibly arrest her now that he'd taken the bag. He stood in the Ironmongery Department, where he happened to find himself when he drew breath, clasping the bag to his breast, and thinking out the problem. Perhaps, perhaps after all they could convict her. The things the detective had seen her take would be missing, and perhaps the detective's statement that she'd seen her take them would be enough to convict her. They'd just say that she must have given the bag to a confederate and arrest her all the same. Perhaps he hadn't helped her after all by taking the bag. It was a horrible idea. He must help her. Desperately he thought and thought and thought until,—yes, that might save her. If he said he'd done it himself no one could ever suspect her. Without waiting to reconsider his decision, Antony went to the Manager's Office.

The Manager sat at his desk, and at the other side sat Antony. Between them on the desk were the contents of the bag—a bottle of bath salts, a box of powder, a pair of silk stockings, a pair of embroidered garters and a small jewelled shingle comb.

"You say you stole them?" said the

Manager.

"Yes," said Antony hoarsely, "I stole them."

The Manager looked puzzled.

"Why?" he asked.

"It just came over me," said Antony desperately. He was seeing horrible mental pictures of himself imprisoned for shop-lifting. What would his father and his mother and his brothers and his sisters say? How on earth would he explain it to them? Glancing again distastefully at the objects on the desk, he could not help wishing that she'd chosen something a little more manly to steal. It would sound so awful in the papers—bath salts, garters, a shingle comb. . . . Whatever would people think? Whatever would—she think, his sister's friend? He went on desperately:

"It sort of comes over me quite suddenly.

It's a sort of dual personality. I'd no idea I was doing it. I suddenly found myself with them. It's like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I can't help it."

"You haven't been drinking, have you?"

said the Manager.

"No," said Antony. "I'm almost a teetotaler. I never have anything but ginger-beer—and claret cup sometimes at dances."

"I want to get it quite clear," said the Manager sternly, "before I decide what measures to take. Did you deliberately steal these things, or did you do it in what I may describe as a state of unconsciousness?"

Antony was just wondering whether deliberately to have stolen those things or to have done it in what the Manager might describe as a state of unconsciousness—when the door opened and the shopwalker entered, followed by the girl. Antony raised a weary hand to his brow. They'd arrested her, after all. His efforts and humiliation had gone for nothing.

"Miss Vallery has had a bag, full of her purchases, stolen, sir," said the shop-

walker.

Antony gasped and looked from one to the other.

"Miss Vallery!" It wouldn't be Meriel Vallery, the film star . . . it couldn't. He stared at her, purple-faced. It was . . . it was . . . it was . . . he'd seen her last film, "Heart's Desire." Why on earth hadn't the likeness struck him before? It was. The shopwalker was still talking.

"I'd noticed Miss Vallery in the shop, sir," she said, "and I followed her because I wanted to ask her to do me the honour of giving me her autograph. I'm a great admirer of hers. When I saw that she'd stopped at one of the counters and put down her bag, I took the liberty of asking her for her autograph and she very kindly gave it to me, and then when she'd finished, we found that her bag with all her purchases had been stolen."

Miss Vallery pointed dramatically to the desk.

"There are my things," she said.

Then she looked accusingly at Antony.

"Did you steal them?"

"Yes," said the Manager. "He admits having stolen them. Do you wish to prosecute?"

Suddenly Miss Vallery dimpled. . . . "No," she said. "You see, I know him.

He once shook mats with me."



"Quick as thought, Antony acted. He seized the bag which stood near him and disappeared with it into the crowd."

skin of it. One day was enough for me, and for them. You were a positive angel to help with the mats. I'm dying of

It was that evening. Antony sat at the writing-table in his bedroom, his diary open before him. Around him was a sea of

torn-up paper. He'd written ten different accounts of the affair and not one satisfied him, for, describe it how he would, he felt that in none of them would he cut a really dignified and heroic figure in the eyes of posterity, and he was too truthful to misrepresent the main facts. He felt that, however it were expressed, posterity would read it with a smile; and the thought of posterity's reading his diary with a smile

was an unbearable one. He had finally found an entry that satisfied him. He was leaning back in his chair, and reading it with an expression of pride.

Posterity, he was sure, could not help

but be impressed by it.

It ran simply:

Decr. 3rd.—Lunched with Meriel Vallery, the film star. Duck and peas: trifle.

WALTER'S CASTLE.

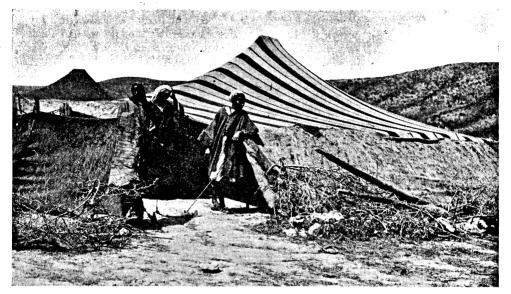
CHAPTER I.

ROSAMOND sat upon Walter's knee And talked with joy of the days to be; While Walter built with the greatest care A beautiful castle-in the air. He spoke of the grounds—a blaze of flowers,— He spoke of the blissful rosebud-hours: He spoke of the lawns where sunset beams Would find them strolling in happy dreams, And then, 'neath fancy's charms galore, He turned the key in the castle door, And, throwing the portal open wide, Into the lounge he led his bride. "See here," he said, "on every hand The latest and best at your command. A model dwelling, I'm bold to state, To suit a girl who is up-to-date. And, Rosamond, dear, if dreams come true, This is the home I'll make for you." And Rosamond's gentle answer ran: "I'm sure you will, dear, if you can,"

CHAPTER II.

So they were married. Why not, indeed, Since wealth is the only thing they need? And just while cutting expenses down They're renting a flat in Camden Town; For Walter's castle (they don't regret) Is not in the hands of the builder yet, Though they still discuss, in an earnest tone, The dream that may someday turn to stone. The kitchen where Rosamond cooks a meal Is not what the smart ones call ideal, But she rolls out dough with a heart of cheer And a bottle that once held ginger-beer; And Walter says: "You can always trust The delicate texture of Rosie's crust."

So the sun comes up and the sun goes down On the dear little flat in Camden Town And, up to the present, the castle tall Is only a picture on the wall, But life is sweet, as it well can be, While Rosamond sits on Walter's knee.



A BEDOUIN TENT MADE OF CAMEL'S HAIR.

IN THE HAREM OF • A SHEIK •

By ROSITA FORBES

LL day long we had been driving in an armoured car across the desert. Toward sunset the land swelled into faint waves and ridges, whose shadows were magnified in pools of mirage.

"We are very near the village," said our Bedouin guide. "Allah grant that they do not take us for strangers and kill us."

The New Jersey chauffeur lent me by Feisul, then King of Syria, smiled. "I guess Americans don't die as easily as all that," he said cheerfully.

"But, alas, I am not an American."

The man looked at me amused. "I guess I never heard of a woman dying before an American either," he remarked.

One of the Arab guard interposed: "Let my friend put on a kufiya to show that he is one of us," he suggested.

The chauffeur submitted to being disguised in a cream-coloured headdress, the end of which he wound about his mouth so that only his good-humoured blue eyes distinguished him from his companions. He threw in the clutch quickly. "We'll have to move some," and the car leaped at the desert track as if it were a live thing which it would devour.

The sky was molten as we approached Palmyra and we saw the old Turkish castle as a fantastic etching against a sheet of flame.

Where the hills narrowed to a pass, black tents were scattered among a herd of camels. A woman rode by on a donkey, a child in her arms, and I was reminded of the Flight into Egypt.

A moment later I had my first glimpse of the city of Zenobia. Palmyra, famous in the days of Aurelian, who defeated her Queen, is a golden ruin, and the sunset lit each arch and pillar and dyed rose-red the sands of that immortal caravan route to Bagdad. From the temple of Baal stole dark-robed women with orange flowers in their hair. The boulders came suddenly to life and showed figures in earth-brown mantles, their rifles ready, for this was a year of war, when all Syria fought for her independence, in defiance of European treaties.

"We are from the Sherif, Allah keep you,"

shouted the Bedouin, Abdulla.

The hostile murmurs died and w e were led into a fortified khan, whose main room overlooked the yard, where camels lay beside their scarlet s a d d les. The floor was strewn with carpets and sheepskins. "God make you strongyou are welcome." sounded from the shadows.

The dust of a long journey caked in my throat, so a man, whose gravity was in keeping

with the length of his beard, brought me a bowl of curdled goat's milk and a water pipe with a mouthpiece of amber. We talked of Arab politics till a message came from the Sheik summoning us to his house.

In moonlight we stumbled between blind walls skirting date gardens, ankle deep in sand, until we came to the threshold of Mohammed, son of Saoud, of the lineage of the Prophet, lord of 5,000 desert horsemen and beneficent despot of Palmyra.

For a moment I thought we had chanced upon the village school, for a crowd of elfin children swarmed in the court, but the warrior who guided us announced that they were the offspring of our host.

He led us into a room where an old man lay on a pile of mattresses in a corner. His swords, rifles and pipe-stems hung on the

wall behind him, and before him stood a brazier with pots of bitter coffee, from which a slave poured mouthfuls for his guests. His voice was weak and sweat poured from his skin.

" T helieve it's flu.' and all m y quinine is in the back of beyond," murmured.

" Take no notice," warned A bd ulla. "Would you tell a lion when it is sick?"

Meekly I went forward t o crouch on



THE AUTHOR IN ARABIAN HAREM DRESS.

the striped mats beside the Sheik. "Allah give you many sons," he greeted me, and began to talk of war. "Man is born to fight and woman to work," he said. "So it was written before your time or mine."

From outside came the groan of camels as they jerked, protesting, to their knees, and the clatter of dishes where hidden women cooked supper. Inside it was very still except for the rustle of coarse garments as, one by one, the headmen slipped in and ranged themselves in a circle, silent after their first dignified greeting.

The Sheik's voice strengthened as his audience increased, and he raised himself on an arm, so that his great bulk showed beneath the tautened folds of his burnous.

worn by wind and sun and darkened by smeared kohl. He forgot his fever and there was something wild and unrestrained in the sudden movement which left him leaning against a camel saddle covered with sheepskins.

"It is good that you have come, for when a man talks with a friend he finds a mirror by which he may see his own mind. Here



THE AUTHOR IN ARABIAN PEASANT DRESS.

"A youth has but one chance to prove his manhood and that in a raid. The warrior whose face has been whitened (to whiten a man's face means to proclaim his valour in public after a battle) will not lack for a bride. By Allah, if a man does not love his rifles better than his pipes, his women hang a haik over his door and call him a virgin!"

The eyes of the old man burned in hollows,

in the desert we rarely speak—there is so much time for words that a man puts off speech till to-morrow or next week."

"Thoughts are more profitable than

words," I suggested.

"The truth is with you," returned the Sheik. "We have a saying, 'First think, then act: there is no necessity for speech.'"



A TYPICAL ARAB GIRL, SUCH AS THE AUTHOR SAW IN THE SYRIAN HAREM.

"Your actions have been swords," I remarked politely.

My host's face was immobile and his eyes fixed. Only his hand moved as he lifted a long-stemmed nargileh. "A man is responsible for his women, his family, his

tribe, and his word is as strong as the rifles which back it, as swift as his horsemen. When I was young there was no corner of the deserts uncrossed by my raiders," he said. "Now my camels grow fat." Silence crept into the room like a tangible presence.

A scent of herbs and incense made the air heavy.

"I must sleep," I whispered at last to Abdulla, but the Bedouin was unresponsive.

"You can't," he said. "Do you not admire the mirrors? They are very beautiful and they came from Paris."

I looked up at the fly-spotted gimerack glasses, so out of keeping with the saddlery and weapons which surrounded them.

The Sheik's glance followed "I had a French wife once and I lived with her in Paris till she died, but you will see her daughter to-night. I brought back many trifles from France, but it was long ago and the have taken most women them."

"How did you like Paris?" I asked.

Mohammed, the red one, so called because of his great hennaed beard, was evidently divided between his desire to impress his liegemen and his honest opinion that Europe, noisy, crowded and expensive, was a much overrated place.

"Whenever I walked in the streets," he said, "there was someone who desired that I should ride. 'It will be quick, it will save time,' they said, and I answered, 'Allah reward you, but I am not in a hurry.' Certainly you have many possessions in the West, but you are afraid."

I looked up surprised.

"You of the West fear death as our women fear childlessness. Many marvels you have done in your country, but we have our Faith and we fear nothing but Allah."

The Sheik, nicknamed "the blade." because when his name was mentioned "a man felt the strength of his neck between his shoulder-blades," spoke with the simplicity of a child. "You have many opinions and you go here and there like an insect scurrying in search of it knows not what, but we have convictions. You say you cannot wait, you cannot pause, and so you waste yourselves. Allah gave us patience."



A SHEIK OF THE SYRIAN TRIBES.

The voice, monotonous and assured, drifted into stillness. The lanterns flickered and sent strange shadows across the room. I felt my eyelids drooping again and I began to wonder if they were real, these motionless figures, wrapped in camel's-hair robes, their chests bare beneath their cartridge-belts, their faces darker than the brown hoods which framed them.

Suddenly boys came in bearing brass ewers full of rose-water, which they poured over the guests' hands. They were followed by Arabs, their rifles still across their shoulders, silver-hilted daggers in their girdles, who placed huge dishes before us, and a minute later we had all set to work on a sheep roasted whole.

We ate rapidly, tearing choice portions off the carcass with our finger-

carcass with our fingernails. The men made guttural noises indicative of appreciation. From far away came the sound of firing. One man rose silently.



AN OLD ARAB WOMAN CALLED "THE SORCERESS," TYPICAL OF THE WOMEN SEEN IN THE HAREM.

"It may be that it is those raiders of el Hamed's. What brings them so near the village?" said his neighbour, as he went out into the night.



AN ARAB MARKET SCENE.

The intermittent firing receded into the distance, while the Sheik talked in the same way, using the same words, as men of his race have done, in black tent or mud-walled dwelling, for 3,000 years. He did not interrupt a sentence when a messenger appeared in the doorway, his burnous stained with blood. "Salaam Aleikum, son of my brother, what is your news?" he asked at last, and something swift and fierce flashed between the two men.

"Aleikum es salaam," came the answer.

"The news is good," and there was no more talk till the new-comer had been served with bitter coffee. Then the Sheik rose with unexpected swiftness and took my arm.

"This is not women's work," he said.

"Come, I will introduce you to my house," and led me to where a throng of women whispered round an open door. "Allah bless your sleep," he murmured, and left me in a room carpeted with rugs from Bokhara, hung with gilt Birmingham mirrors and furnished with an enormous couch on which hard quilts were piled one upon another.

I was just wondering whether it would be possible to sleep on top of them, as they seemed not to have been disturbed for years, when the Sheik's wives trooped in and sat down on the floor, evidently prepared to watch my movements. There were a dozen of them, of all ages and races. The oldest, white-haired and shrivelled, looked like the Mother of Time. The youngest was a child of thirteen, with apple cheeks, expecting her first baby. I looked into grey eyes, brown eyes, dark-rimmed, marvellous green eyes and wondered how to begin a conversation.

Abdulla's voice came from outside.

"Sayeda, have you all your desires?"
"No," I answered firmly. "I want a

Footsteps crunched across the yard and returned more slowly. The women giggled and pulled their robes of indigo and scarlet across their faces. A bowl like a large breakfast-cup was pushed through the door, with a murmured "All we have is yours," and I was left staring at the exquisite damascened brass of my "bath."

Timidly I refused the crone's offer of a brush which showed signs of baldness, due to age rather than use, I imagine, since Arab women prefer combs made of wood, and, having removed my outer garments, I slipped as unobtrusively as possible on to, not into, the bed.

There was a sigh of disappointment among the audience, but no movement. Gingerly, for fear of disturbing the insect life of the bed, I sat up and made an appropriate speech: "May your life be peaceful, as the land your master rules."

Eyes young with hope, tired with age, mystic with motherhood, gazed at me expectantly, and suddenly I realised that I was expected to invite some of the harem to share my couch. The choice was wide. While I struggled with a certain embarrassment, a few words of execrable French uttered by the owner of the bluest eyes reminded me of my host's romance when he had accompanied a Syrian mission to Paris. I beckoned to the speaker to share the repose which I felt would be troubled.

"You are sweet, so sweet," she said as she curled up beside me, "and to-morrow I will give you a paste that will make you fat, so fat that a man will give many camels for

you."

A PRAYER FOR RAIMENT.

CLOTHE my body, if Thou wilt, in sober hue; The homely wren hides easily from view.

Yet, deck my mind in gold and silver sheen Like a dove's plumes with rainbow lights between.

And for my soul—give me as blithe array As Thy blue kingfisher wears every day.

FAY INCHFAWN.

Social Reflections



ALL'S FARE.

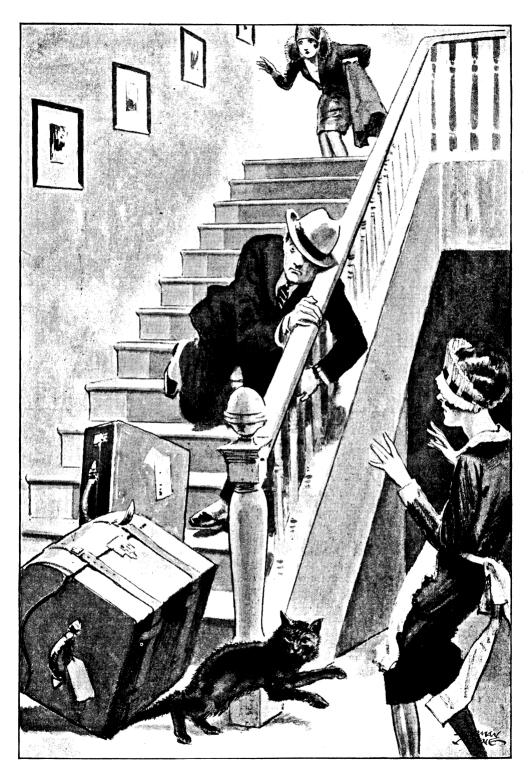
"Drive you home, sir?"

"I should say not; my home is in New York."
"That's all right, sir; change at the Docks!"

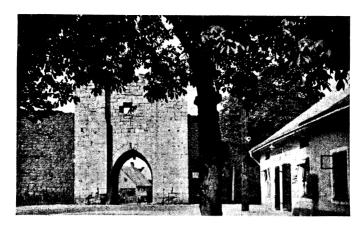


PLAYING FOR SAFETY.

AMATEUR INSTRUCTOR: You'd better have a spoon here. FAIR NOVICE: I'd love to—but don't you think somebody might see us?



LUGGAGE IN ADVANCE!



THIRTEENTH-CENTURY GATEWAY, VISBY,

• GOTLAND: • THE SAGA ISLAND OF THE • • BALTIC • •

By DONALD SMITH, F.R.G.S.

LL day we had thrust northward over tumbled seas, with driving rain and a lowering grey sky. Nothing had broken the monotony of the waste of water but a timber boat threshing heavily southward, driving stubbornly through the spume, swept at times from stem to stern. Late in the afternoon the mist lightened, and suddenly, as the folds of a great curtain might open and close, the sun stabbed through the greyness and one saw a thin line of foam, cliffs gaunt and high, topped with a narrow line of turf, and huddled between surf and the cliff's crest of green a town of jumbled roofs. Then the mist fell again.

We had sighted the saga island of Gotland, and Visby, the town of yesteryear. Much in the same way the island enters the written records of man, and, strangely enough, by the hand of our own King Alfred. Hakluyt, putting into delightful Elizabethan English

from the King's Anglo-Saxon, includes in his "English Voyages" "The Voyage of Octher . . . reported by himselfe unto Alfred the famous king of England, about the yeere 890." After recording the discovery of the North Cape, he states how Octher travelled "out of his country of Halgoland into the sound of Denmarke unto a port which seemeth to be Wismer or Rostorke." The story is then taken up by his English shipmate, Wulfstan, and we read, "Wolstan sayd . . . upon his leerboord also was Bargenland (Bornholm) which hath a private king unto which it is subject. Having left Bargenland, he passed by Blekingie (Bleckinge), Meere, Eland (Oland) and Gotland, having them on his Leerboord," and so on to Esthonia. That fleeting glimpse is the first written record of Gotland. What a pity Wolstan did not land!

The Baltic has two striking exceptions

from its uniformly low shores. The first are the four-hundred-feet-high chalk cliffs of the Danish island of Möen, the second the sixty-mile stretch of limestone cliffs along the west coast of Gotland. The nature of the island is this: imagine a row of some thirteen books and pamphlets of varying thicknesses which have slid over until they lie upon their sides, overlapping like slates upon a roof. Imagine nine of those thirteen to be bound in various shades of grey and to represent limestones, and three to

corner of the island the pages have been singed by æon-old convulsion, and the grey limestone has become a red transition marble. An English company exploited this "Gotland marble" until the natives became roused by the destruction of a very lovely and unique sight, and the concession was withdrawn. The debt of the geologist does not end here. During four successive ice ages, great Baltic glaciers ground slowly, like the mills of God, over Gotland, and the island was saved only by the fact that it had retired



PICTURESQUE VISBY.

The Cathedral Church of St. Mary, with the ruined towers of St. Lars and St. Drottens and encircling ramparts. In front is the Hansa Merchants' house, now called the "Old Apothecary." The wealth of foliage is noteworthy so far North.

be a mottled brown and to represent clays, and one to be almost white and to represent a fine sandstone. Imagine finally that some of the thicker volumes consist of a number of varying parts bound together because of a similarity of contents, and one gets an idea of the geologists' paradise revealed by the cliffs of Gotland. Fossils and fossils and promise of fossils are there, corals and shells and strange sea creatures in beds from ten to sixty yards in thickness. Not only are the edges of these pages of the world's history revealed, but towards the southern

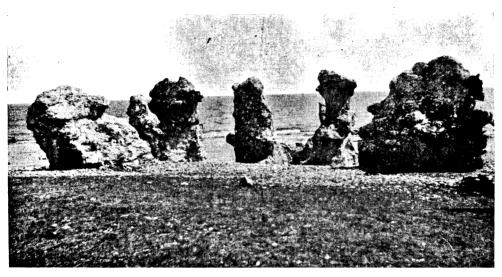
below sea-level. Still, incalculable thicknesses of rock were planed away, and much of the surface to this day has only been able to cover its baldness by the merest coating of turf or the thinnest of pine forest. Tracts there are of rich, stiff boulder clay, which, when cleared of forest, are excellent wheat land. Innumerable shallow depressions in the fairly level plain sloping gently from the high western edge to the long sand beaches of the east have filled through the ages with peat. These, drained by deepcut dykes, give wonderful crops of hay,

which comes to England in heavily-compressed, wire-bound trusses. Some of the shallow lakes show the process of chalkmaking in extraordinary manner. The lime with which the stream waters are impregnated is separated into countless myriads of microscopic water creatures and is deposited as white as driven snow. This diatomic dust, with the innumerable shells of tiny water snails, forms feet-thick deposits, which in summer, when the shallow water dries, show pure as a linen bleaching ground.

The island added to its interest by rising from the sea by a series of jerks. The first of these raised the cliffs over Visby town above sea-level and then stayed for a few hundred years. So one may climb to the

by wave action. This has happened in Gotland. The limestone in places was so soft, however, that the "stacks" were left standing alone, with no cliff backing, so that, by reason of the rising of the island, strange "rauk families," as these groups of fantastically weathered rocks are called, are to be met with in flowering meadows, or among pine forests, towering even above the tree-tops, and giving rise to all manner of local legend.

And then there are caves. Caves at sealevel; caves high in the cliff faces; caves high and dry where what was once sea beach is now rich pasturage—and in these caves have been found the first traces of Man. How these men of the Mid-Stone



FANTASTICALLY WEATHERED LIMESTONE STACKS, KNOWN AS "RAUK FAMILIES."

highest point of the island and there find a perfect sea beach—pebbles, shells, etc., which can be traced in full circuit, giving the outline of a former Gotland. Later a second rising took place, while to-day a third slow upheaval continues, each giving its beach. In parts of the island long stretches of these "pebble ridges" have been used as ready metalled roads, and excellent roads they make, sinuous, but hard and dry, raised above the forest floor like low embankments. These successive elevations have resulted in the formation of another peculiarity on the island. Most people are familiar with the appearance on rocky coasts of "stacks," i.e. pillars and pinnacles of hard rock left standing when the surrounding softer rock has been eroded Age came to cross forty miles of open sea to an island far beyond the horizon is a problem yet unsolved. The old Guta-Saga begins:—

"Gotland was first found by Thielvar. Gotland was so enchanted that during the day it sank, but during the night it rose from the waters. But after man lighted his hearth fire upon the island it sank no more."

Later, the men of the Bronze Age peopled the land thickly, and powerful chieftains left their mark in the form of great burial mounds, which, from lack of earth, were piled of the innumerable glacial stones of all sizes which strew the soil.

Another relic of those times peculiar to Gotland are large blocks used in the polishing of exquisitely formed stone axes, which are scored with long, parallel, deeply-bit groves. As these are always found near water, it is clear that the Gotlander had solved the secret of the grindstone.

It is with the coming of the Iron Age that the island becomes the true archæologists' paradise. The Baltic became the centre of a wealthy North. The peoples of its shores seethed with a strange unrest. Preying first upon themselves, their fighting strength pierced farther and farther afield, by the land routes east and south to the Caspian, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean, till the Goth shook the Roman in his own land, and the Greek Emperor at Constantinople: while by water to the

Northman from the outer isles contracted the habit, so the Heimskringla tells us, of taking a summer cruise in the Baltic "to gather gear." How sweetly piracy is expressed! "In the meantime, however, it was determined to take a cruise in the Baltic, to gather property." More than at any other place the site of the old sacrificial rites, where the cliffs dropped in terraces to the sea and where fair harbourage offered, became a regular market, and Visby, "the place of sacrifice," took birth.

It is probable that Christianity came to Gotland on one of the restless journeys of Norse King Olaf—the Saint Olaf of the Sagas—who picked up his Christianity



GOTLAND'S SOUTH-WEST COAST.

To the left a "stack" (rauk) of hard limestone, called the Old Man, because of the clearly defined face. Next is a softer limestone with huge grottoes, the Old Man's Dining Rooms.

west the Northman took tribute of all lands, from the Friesian shores to Sicily. And Gotland was the heart of the North. Over 12,000 Anglo-Saxon coins have been dug from the soil of the island. Almost equally numerous are finds of Arabian silver coins, while wellnigh 5,000 Roman silver coins are known to have been recovered. Gotland became the home of a republic of farmer traders, wealthy and proud. The skill of the native metal-workers had no equal in the North. The whole island became a clearing-house for the goods of Esthonia, of Novgorod, of Kiev: here East met West, and the shrewd native drew wealth from all. So much so that the poorer

together with much Dane geld in England, where, among other things, he broke down London Bridge for our King Ethelred, and so doing named St. Olave's and gave to us the nursery song "London Bridge is broken down." His landing-place on Gotland is named St. Olofsholm to this day. To the first age of Christianity, and immediately before, belong the great gravestones (Rune and Bild—picture-stones) which were formerly so plentiful. The destruction of these unique pictorial and scriptorial records has now been checked, and the better specimens are preserved in the various museums.

Following the introduction of Christianity, and the consequent limitation of piracy,



ST. CATHERINE'S AND THE MARKET SQUARE.

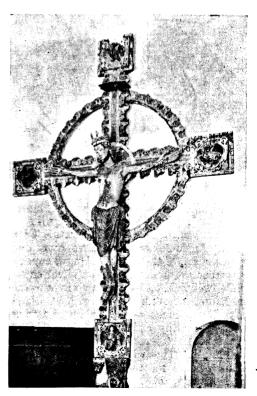
Visby entered upon a wonderful phase of commercial prosperity. Communities of foreign traders established themselves. long rivalry between town and countryside, turning at last to much bloodshed, ended in favour of the town, which rose to pride of place among all the Baltic ports. One has only to tread the cobbled, winding streets of Visby to weave anew the web of its former greatness. Stand in the Market Place to-day—a terrace half-way between seashore and cliff-top-and on one side rises sheer the lovely ruin of St. Catherine's, the Franciscan monastery church, and on the other, above the red roofs and white walls, pierce the three towers of the present cathedral, St. Mary's, the restored church of the German merchants. Here they kept their records, valuables, and possibly much merchandise. The exterior of the east end to-day resembles a warehouse as much as it resembles a cathedral. It is even possible that the mighty Hansa League itself took actual birth within its walls.

Any chance turn of the winding streets may reveal glimpses of entrancing beauty or compelling interest. Eleven of the seventeen medieval churches stand in ruins, unique among them the Church of the Holy Ghost, so similar to the Chapel of the Red Mount at King's Lynn. Abrupt from narrow ways rise high merchant houses of the German traders, repellent in their self-contained isolation, jarring the

skyline with steep crow-stepped gables: and jostling them as in good-natured derision are old half-timbered houses with projecting upper stories, some delightfully ivy-clad, some lath and plaster, some with excellent brick nogging, which for all the world might have been transplanted from some Tudor market town. High walls with great secretive gates enclose oldworld courtyards from which spire upwards majestic lombardy poplars, or over the red tiles of the screening walls in spring spill cascades of golden laburnum, or later in the year the by-ways are sweet with lilac, and later still with roses. Walnut and silver birch, chestnut and lime andbetween the greenery—glimpses of the bluest sea.

> Ruins and roses, Lilacs and grey walls, Red roofs that climb, Where sunset splendour falls.

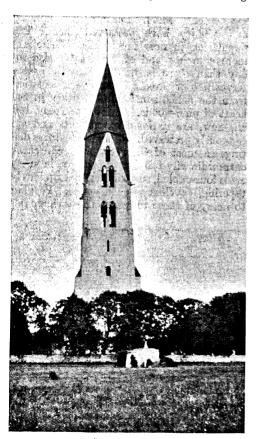
Around the whole sweeps a mighty span of girdling walls with towers and battlements, a rampart unequalled in any land. Such is Visby, the town of memories, the town of legend, of the glamour of the past,



A CRUCIFIX OF GOTLANDIC TYPE AT STANGA— LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

the town that faces the sunsets of the Viking seas. What feet have throughd that market square! Merchants from Novgorod. from Reval and Riga, merchants from Wismar and Rostock and Lybeck, from Rotterdam and King's Lynn, Crusaders from Denmark to Esthonia and the Lettish shores, Knights of the Sword, Knights of the great Teutonic Order, Dominican monks from Viborg and Abo, Franciscans from Italy, Cistercians from Burgundy, Bishops from Sweden travelling to Rome and the Holy Land, pilgrims, seamen, artificers, fishermen, travelling masons and skilled craftsmen. weavers, dyers, shipbuilders—what a town it was in its prime! Merchant vying with merchant, guild with guild, church with church. And what a paradise for the historian-antiquarian to-day!

But misfortune came. Sacked by the Danes, sacked by the Lybeckers, sacked by the Victual Brothers, a confederacy of subsidised pirates infesting the Baltic during



ÖJA CHURCH.

Early fourteenth century. The two widenings at the base are the watchman's galleries, not buttresses.



THE CATHEDRAL.

The ground rises steeply in terraces, so that one looks down upon the church, or up to it.

the interminable disputes between Sweden and Denmark, who seized the town and dwelt in it until driven out by the Teutonic Knights, the town shrank within its shell. Every church became a ruin. The great town hall disappeared, the castle was rased, the royal palace and the homes of the merchant princes left not a wrack behind.

Visby, however, is not all of Gotland. Long white roads lead through the city gates north and east and west. There is quite a good rail service—leisurely, it is true but giving excellent facilities for seeing the country from observation platforms at the ends of the carriages. There are motor road services, and there are Fords. Since the island is nearly ninety miles long by some thirty odd miles wide, there is much to see. Immediately north of Visby, crowning a great bare cliff, stand three high stone pillars, stark against the sky. Surrounding them is a circular stone enclosure. They are the only remaining gallows of the North. Does their like still stand anywhere? Near by is one of those mysterious mazes lined with white stones in the turf which so mystify the archæologist.



OLD MILL AT LJUGARN.

Typical of a great number, but rather large, hence the stone base.

Be it from road or rail, two features soon strike the British eye. One is the great prevalence of windmills. There seem to be more windmills than farms, and in some cases this is true. Formerly every landowner had his mill—the Gotlander being far too independent to use his neighbour's, or to cooperate and use a common mill—so that, where smaller holdings have been absorbed into larger ones, there arose a plethora of

mills. Mills there are of almost every type, but mostly, since the peasant built for himself from his own timber, there survives to-day the oldest type of all, the tripod post mill. Small, some not more than twelve feet in height, many in every detail are as those first of all to be pictured in the pages of the Luttrell Psalter. Many are falling into decay. One wonders why the hand querns are preserved so carefully in the museums, while these pass, and not one of them is carefully preserved. What a pity that one of these records of a past age which have almost disappeared from the English country-side is not acquired while there is still time and re-erected in the grounds of some English museum.

A second feature that one notices immediately is the great number of churches, the isolation of many of them from any other buildings, and the strange beauty of their lofty spires. When Christianity reached the island there was already a thick population of wealthy merchant farmers. Everywhere timber churches sprang up, with richly carven doorways. As quickly again these were torn down that their places might be taken by stone buildings. The everincreasing wealth of the island is shown in reflex by the care lavished upon the churches. Rebuilding followed rebuilding, until the Danish invasion swept over the land in 1361, and building ceased. Parish seems to have vied with parish. From the beginning many of the churches were large and most solidly built. Their very simplicity and solidity have preserved them. population is now much less. There are more churches and of far greater size today than there is need. Many a pastor serves two or three. Some rise in isolation from the fields, some stand solitary in the heart of pine-woods. A few are ruins, but all, now, are national monuments and are rigorously preserved. Common features distinguish most of these Gotland churches: extraordinarily tall western towers, in many cases four-gabled, surmounted by exquisitely tapering, eaveless wooden spires. Peculiar to many of these towers is the watchman's



THE BURMEISTER HOUSE.

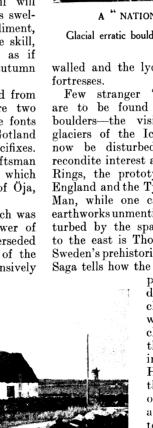
Timber Merchant's house of early seventeenth century. Noteworthy for its internal painted decoration, the upper storey warehouse, and the mass of ivy which is remarkable so far North.

gallery, with open arcade, half-way up the tower. It is from these that one gets wonderful views of field and forest, meadow and mere, mill and church spires, bounded in the far distance by the northern sea, incredibly clear, wondrously fresh, exquisitely still—all of which is . . . Gotland.

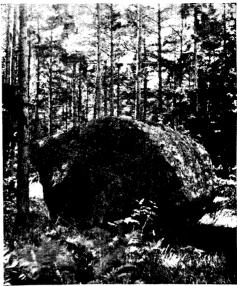
Peculiar to many again is the saddleback roof, which occurs when the hand of the rebuilder, who invariably began with the chancel, was checked, and so there remains the western tower, usually the oldest part of the whole, then a low intermediate nave, and finally a lofty chancel. Exactly similar is the lovely little church of Tilty in Essex. Strange to the English eye is the contrast between the blinding white walls and the steep, black-boarded roofs. The extreme simplicity of plan omits clerestory, aisles, window tracery, porches, but all is compensated by the glory of the doorways. Sheer, exquisite beauty—one detail will suffice—a colonnade of slender shafts swelling at the foot to meet the pediment, and just there, carven with delicate skill, a single leaf to each shaft, artless as if resting there by the caprice of the autumn breeze.

Within, the churches have suffered from centuries of neglect, but there are two treasures at least of great price, the fonts and the great crucifixes. Unique to Gotland is the detached corona of these crucifixes. Few of the works of the mediæval craftsman can vie with the perfection of that which hangs in the gloom of the church of Öja, in the south of the island.

On the same eminence as the church was frequently the "castle," a peel tower of defence and safe storage, until superseded by the church tower itself. Many of the churchyards themselves were defensively



OLD BARN AT SUNDRE, HALF NEWLY THATCHED.



A "NATIONAL MONUMENT."

Glacial erratic boulder from the Aland Islands.

walled and the lych-gates are often small fortresses.

Few stranger "national monuments" are to be found than the great erratic boulders—the visiting-cards left by the glaciers of the Ice Age—which may not now be disturbed or defaced. A more recondite interest attaches to the Judgment Rings, the prototype of the Moothills of England and the Tynwald Hill of the Isle of Man, while one can wander in awe over earthworks unmentioned in history and undisturbed by the spade. Deep in the forest to the east is Thors Hill, the mightiest of Sweden's prehistoric remains. The old Guta Saga tells how the island became so thickly

peopled that lots were drawn and a third was chosen to leave the land with wives, children and chattels, and how this third refused, and gathered in a great camp on Thors Hill until driven out to the neighbouring island of Farö (sheep island), and driven thence passed to Esthonian Dagö, but were everywhere moved on, and wandered until "they came to Greekland, where they dwell still."



PICTURE STONE (BILDSTEN), ABOUT NINE FEET HIGH.

End of tenth and beginning of eleventh century, with interesting contemporary incised pictures. In the foreground is an excellent example of the Polishing Stones (slipsten).

The modern Gotlander, living by the soil and mainly his own landlord, is rumoured

to have done extremely well during and since the Great War. Intensely conservative and secretive, living much as his fathers lived, he yet shows a general air of well-being, and there is much rebuilding of barns and homesteads. One has to travel now to the far north or south to meet with the delightful deep reed thatching of yesterday. He has, again, a very shrewd eye for the material side of life, and is well content to hand over antiquities, ramparts, churches, ruins, obsolete farm implements, and so on, to antiquarian societies and museums, though one hears grumbles that the money were better spent on hospitals. There seems also to have been no objection to smaller objects, even from the churches, being removed to public or private collections. There has also been great willingness to sell treasure-trove to the highest bidder, even though he were a foreigner.

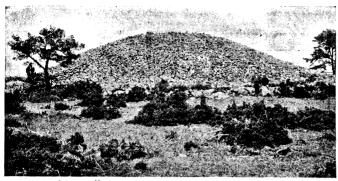
A strange jostling of ancient and modern everywhere, up-to-date appears mostmechanical farming on one holding, and on the next the use of implements reminiscent of Saxon England. In one field the young men, strenuous at football, and in the next the old men intent on a form of island quoits played with a stone discus, as one might imagine the first skin-coated men of the island played before their caves in the evening: old women knitting the lovely traditional patterns by electric light: folk-dancing at May-day festivals, but one-step and the fox-trot for prefer-

At Ljugarn, a holiday resort on the east coast—timber summer homes lost in the pine-woods, and a glorious empty stretch of sands—the harbour pier broadens at the end to a natural dance-floor, and there, after ten in the evening, under a democratic moon, or still more democratic darkness, to the tune of concertina and fiddle and the murmuring plash of the water around, and with no illumination but the steady recurrent red and green flash of the navigation light, the youth of Ljugarn and the neighbourhood, the summer visitor and the kitchen-maid,



A "RAUK" PORTAL OF THE EAST COAST AT LERGRAF.

The view well shows the height to which the old sea beach has been raised above the present sea-level.



"GRAJPR'S RÖR," THE LARGEST GRAVE CAIRN IN THE ISLAND.

Traditionally the burial site of Grajpr, one of the three "triplet" grandsons of Thjelvar the Hardworking who, according to the Guta Saga, discovered and settled Gotland.

farm-hand and freeholder's daughter, dance to their heart's content.

"How long do they go on?" said I.

"Until the musicians get tired."

"And when is that?'

"Well, that depends on how much there is in the hat."

Intensely attractive for a short stay, one would hesitate to recommend the island for holiday purposes for longer periods, except to those with specialist interests. And for them Visby is the only centre. Wonderful bathing beaches there are, but, blow the

wind off-shore, and the warm surface water is gone, and the Baltic is very, very cold beneath. For naturalist \mathbf{or} church hunter the field is rich, but the best advice is, always take a good stock of eatables drink, for ways are long and villages and refreshment houses rare to nonexistent. Still, to the summer visitor to the North. with a few days or a week to spare, Visby will repay with many a haunting memory of beauty un-

expected and charm that is undefined.

The most direct route, and the most comfortable, to Gotland, is from London (Tilbury) to Gothenburg (Göteborg), thence to Stockholm by rail, and Stockholm to Visby by an excellent packet service. Hull, Newcastle and Leith also run direct services to Gothenburg. An alternate route runs across country from Gothenburg to Kalmar and thence to Visby, but the boat accommodation is limited, and, for small vessels, the Baltic can be very unpleasant.

THE EXILED SHEPHERD.

MY heart is weary now,
Weary are my feet
For the cloud-shores at the ocean's brim
Where sky and water meet,

For the gleaming mountain-sides And the opal fields, The silver kine, the golden sheep That magic pasture yields.

Looking on that country
Bitterly I know
There kept I once the shining flocks
Long and long ago.

And O, to tread again
The pearly-pebbled beach,
To land upon the cloud-shores
That only dreams can reach!

VALENTINE FANE.

THE EMPTY HOUSE

By JANE H. FINDLATER

• ILLUSTRATED BY E. WELCH RIDOUT

OUISA and Millicent Price were the leading modistes of Southington-on-Sea. They were very prosperous in their calling, esteemed by their fellow tradespeople and popular with their customers. Louisa, a handsome woman of forty, had always been the leading spirit of the business. She was, alas! inclining to stoutness now, though she had been doing her best for years to overcome the unfortunate tendency: her figure was, as she would have said, very firmly "controlled"; sometimes in hot weather she would have given all she had in the world to relax the control and relapse into a frank middle-aged spread; but no-that would simply never do, controlled she must remain if she perished in the attempt. So with her fat white hand she would surreptitiously wipe the beads of sweat from her brow when a customer's back was turned, and pray for courage to endure the ordeal of compression.

Louisa was a very clever woman. She had begun life with little capital except her quick wits and a certain amount of real good taste: unerringly she knew which fashion would last and might safely be followed, which would fall flat and should be avoided. Once every year Louisa went to Paris and feasted her eyes on the best and the worst in dress that was to be seen there. On the way home she so to speak digested this orgy of clothes, and by the time she got back to Southington-on-Sea was able to draw up for her customers a very fair compromise between over-smartness and dowdi-"Not," as she would sometimes say, "not that I haven't often to turn out figures of fun though I do my best not to: but there are women that won't be content till they've made fools of themselves. So they must just be allowed to if that's their choice."

Louisa had the perfect shop manner. She could fool a customer to the top of her bent without letting it be seen for a moment that she was doing so. She never lost patience or resented (apparently) any alteration, however unnecessary it might appear to her to be. With raging fury in her heart she answered gently, yet knew to perfection the art of instilling a sort of icy aloofness into her manner when she thought a customer was going altogether too far in the direction of unreasonable faultfinding. Then with old clients how excellent Louisa's greeting was !—a sort of allcomprehending cordiality which at once set the mind of an anxious shopper at rest: all would be well, the right clothes would be supplied to her without any effort on her part; was not Louisa there, supremely capable, knowing exactly what was wanted? A gifted woman Louisa indeed.

Millicent, the younger sister, was thin as a ghost. All her nerves were on the surface as it were; she could scarcely at the end of a long day keep from bursting into tears from nervous fatigue. Louisa could not trust her with certain well-known irritating customers for a moment; her temper would have given way under the strain immediately. Rheumatic and neuralgic, her feet were knobby and painful—in easy cloth shoes she might have felt comfortable, but these poor feet with their great swollen joints had to be relentlessly thrust into tight patent leather slippers; she sometimes tottered as she walked to and fro. across the showroom on her high heels, but would these pitiless tyrants "the customers" have tolerated a showroom lady in flat cloth shoes? I trow not.

Such then were the sisters, curiously different in appearance and as strangely divergent in character. For Louisa was a woman of high intelligence while Millicent possessed only the most ordinary mentality. The first excitements of business were long over for them both by this time; they had made an assured place for themselves in the town and were sure of a good yearly income. This is the exact point in life when intelligent persons begin to look about them and

take stock of their position, while those who are less thoughtful settle down on their lees, glad to relax, glad to aspire no longer, content with the level they have attained. Louisa was not of this sort: she had begun to question.

What's it all for? "she said to her sister one day. "What are we working ourselves to death for, now that we've made a certain amount of money? Couldn't we find some better way of living than all this effort and

worry?"

Millie made peevish, unintelligent assent to the questioning of her clever sister: "Oh yes, it's worrying enough—there's that skirt of Mrs. Rolletson's to be all taken up again to-morrow because that stupid girl mistook the measures."

"It's not only the worry," Louisa persisted, "it's to think that we spend our whole lives just urging all sorts of nonsense on other women."

But Millie didn't see it in that light. "It's as good a way to make a living as any other," she said.

"Perhaps—but now we've made a living, I often wonder why I keep on at it—it's not the life I would choose."

And then Louisa caught herself up and changed the subject. The fact was that she knew very well why she kept on in business. Ambrose Reilly was the reason. Yes, an Irish "traveller," getting elderly like herself, but with a gallant eye and a caressing manner for every woman, was the anchor that held Louisa Price in business. If she retired, she knew she would never see Ambrose Reilly-and where would the colour of life be then? As it was, they often met. Every few weeks or so he came to Southington, and Louisa wondered if he was quite as assiduous in his visits to the other business houses of the town as he was to hers. Was it imagination on her part that he made excuses for coming to see her? Certainly he came pretty often, and stayed a long time. True, he had never said a tender word to her; but he looked a good deal, she thought, and his handshake had in it a world of meaning-"he held her hand but as all may-or so very little longer."

Once several years ago they had met in Paris, a never-to-be-forgotten episode in Louisa's life. Not that it, either, had held any sentimental moments. Reilly had taken her to dine at Rumpelmayer's (he was very fond of good eating), then to the theatre, where they discussed nothing more roman-

tic than the fashions there displayed; then he drove her back to her most respectable little hotel. That had been all; a very ordinary civility from a man to whose firm she often gave large orders-but Louisa still thrilled with interest and romance over the happenings of that evening. She had, in her clever way, detected the weak spot in Reilly's character: his fondness for good living. Now, when he was expected at Southington, Louisa fell to work and concocted a meal such as his soul loved. was duly served up in that comfortable sitting-room at the back of the shop where the Price sisters passed their few leisure hours.

"It's good business to please Mr. Reilly," Louisa said to her sister—and Millie was not in the least taken in by the remark: she knew. This was going to be one of these feast-days and Millie with rare tact had decided to go out for her lunch.

"I can't be bothered eating so much," she explained. "It's far too hot; I'll go along the Esplanade and have a breath of sea air, and take a cup of coffee at Sharpe's Restaurant—that's all I want today."

"Oh, you'd better stay," Louisa said, in duty bound; but the suggestion was very

half-heartedly made.

Millie shook her head. "Not I. You'll be feeding him like a fighting-cock, I suppose, Loo?"

"Just a nice luncheon: I've got some clear soup, and I'll cook a few oysters in cream on the chafing-dish, and I made Chrissie boil a ham in white wine—the recipe I learnt at Tours—and I've some peaches for dessert—quite easy all of it," she said apologetically.

Millie, as she turned away to adjust her hat before the glass, allowed herself to smile. "Quite easy," she agreed, thinking how different tasks were made by the motive

that inspired them.

When Millie had gone, Louisa went into the sitting-room to see that all was in order. The room looked to the back, so was cooler and quieter than the showrooms which faced the glare and noise of the Esplanade. Louisa threw the window wide, drew the table up to it, and herself laid the fresh white cloth and set the brightly polished forks and spoons upon it. In the centre she placed an old green-ware dish which held the peaches, plump and fragrant. The chafing-dish stood beside her plate, the wine-cooked ham, pink and firm, was on the

sideboard; a cunningly prepared salad made up the meal.

Louisa looked at her preparations and smiled—she had done well, she thought. Yet at that very moment she was visited by a doubt which had often assailed her:

of forty now, and the man I love isn't worth loving—that's the truth for once," she told herself relentlessly. Other women there were who had gained the crown of life—their lovers had been men of account, courageous, occupied with the great affairs



tures to his account. . . .

Louisa sat down by the window and looked out into the bit of back garden, leaning her head on her hand. "Here I am, a woman

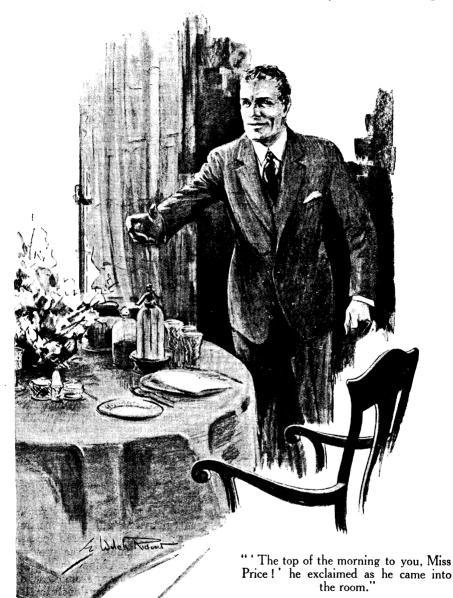
fond of eating, with a too-gallant manner,

and no doubt with half a dozen fond adven-

had it never been her fate to meet such a man? Why must she give her heart away to Ambrose Reilly? Could she manage to weave any trace of nobility into her conception of his character and calling? Just a traveller in silks—scarcely a man's job at

all that—he knew his business thoroughly, of course, and could, as Louisa scathingly told herself, "talk the hind-leg off a donkey" as he expatiated on silks, the "loading" (that never was put into any that he sold) on artificial silks, on colour and texture and

Louisa had come to this melancholy conclusion the door opened and Reilly was shown in—a tall man, who, if he had followed some hardier vocation, would have been very handsome. As it was, he had become undeniably stout. A life passed



all the rest of it.... But where was the nobility in this sort of thing? Just as

largely in railway trains after eating heavy meals, had padded his muscles with superfluous flesh; his hands, which should by rights have been thin and work-hardened, had little soft pink cushions on their fingertips; his well-shaped jaw was beginning to have the suspicion of a double chin beneath it. . . . Reilly was an Irishman, and as a mild form of joke he affected at times the idioms of his country, a habit that rather annoyed Louisa, whose taste, you will remember, was good.

"The top of the morning to you, Miss Price!" he exclaimed as he came into the room. "And a grilling hot day it is shure and sartin. I declare the boots were about burnt on the feet of me coming along the

Esplanade!"

Louisa, in duty bound, laughed at the pleasantry, though she wished he would stop this sort of fooling, it didn't really amuse her. She begged Reilly to sit by have a nice bit of lunch immediately," she added, glancing again with a good deal of satisfaction at the table. It struck her that Reilly did not look either well or happy in spite of his sportive entrance probably the heat, she thought, or more probably business worries. Well, she would soon make him forget these in the enjoyment of an excellent meal. She rang for the soup to come in, explaining as she did so that her sister had gone out, "For as you know, Mr. Reilly, the lunch hour is the only one we business people get to ourselves, and she often says to me that a breath of fresh air is worth more to her than a dozen meals."

Chrissie brought in two little covered bowls filled with amber-coloured soup. Louisa sipped hers delicately—it was perfect—hadn't she herself stood over the saucepan yesterday evening in spite of the heat, till she was sure that it was going to be just right?

Reilly also tasted the soup, and Louisa waited for him to say a word of praise—he was generally profuse with compliments on her cookery—but to her dismay he pushed the soup-bowl aside and bent forward, leaning his comely head on his hand.

"You must excuse me, Miss Price," he said. "I've no heart for anything to-day. I was trying to bluff it out when I came in, but it's no good."

"Dear me! You're not ill, I hope?"
Louisa cried.

"I? No—I'm quite well—it's the boy—my son, my little chap. I'm afraid I'm going to lose him."

Louisa gasped. Just as well that Reilly's head was still bowed and that he did not look up; a spasm of pain crossed Louisa's face for a moment before she had got herself in hand. Then she spoke very calmly:

"Your son? I didn't know about him, in fact I didn't even know that you were married: we business folk have no time to know each other's private affairs, we meet so much just on the surface. . . I'm terribly sorry to hear this: what's wrong with the child, Mr. Reilly? Is it scarlet fever, or what?"

Reilly shook his head. "An accident—fell off a wall and hurt his back—he's a daring wee chap, always into some mischief."

"You wouldn't like him not to have

spirit," said Louisa.

"To be sure I wouldn't—but there's more than that in it. . . ." He stopped, shook his head again and looked down blankly at the tablecloth, silent and staring as if he were in great perplexity.

"What do you mean?" Louisa asked, her voice kind and curious at the same moment. He hesitated, began to say something and stopped once more, finally said

lamely:

"He's not well looked after."

"How's that?" Louisa questioned again.
"My wife is not very strong," Reilly began, and then suddenly lifting his glance from the table and looking straight at Louisa, he blurted out: "That's not really it—my wife drinks, if you want to know the truth. I've had a hell of a life at home, and now my boy is to be taken from me, the one good thing I have."

Gone was the would-be gallant Reilly of former days; only a man, broken and wretched, sat there talking about the great sordid trouble of his life. Louisa rose from her place at the head of the table and sat down beside him.

"Tell me about it," she said gently. "It's sometimes a help to tell a friend one's trouble."

His story, alas! was only one of a thousand such tragedies.

"She was the prettiest girl you could see when I married her," Reilly began (adding with a flicker of his old self for a moment, "Leave me alone for the pretty girls"). "Well, we were happy enough at first, but I was often away from home, of course, and the poor girl was lonely and got into the way of going about with some rather gay friends she had. They taught her to take champagne, and from that she began on brandy. She wasn't strong for a time after the child was born, and perhaps that tempted her to it more—anyway, there she is, ready to sell her soul for a glass of brandy now. . .."

"And the boy—who looks after him?" Louisa asked, after allowing a moment of silence to fall.

"That's the worst of it. She can't keep a decent servant, of course, so the child gets neglected. She's crazy about him, and when she's sober there isn't a fonder mother. The doctor tells me it would be the end of her altogether if I took him away from her. for she tries every now and then to pick herself up for his sake-oh yes, she'll go on all right for two or three weeks perhaps, and then down she goes again. . . . come home and find the house dark, as if everyone had died . . . then I know what's up—I'll find her lying drunk on her bed, and the servant gone out and Paddy crying alone in the kitchen, poor wee man, hugging the cat; it's the only friend left to him. . . . ?

"But," said Louisa in her firm, business voice, "you must put a stop to it, Mr. Reilly, for the sake of the child."

"Oh, that's easily said! I've said it myself a hundred times. And the next day the poor girl will cry and cry and hang round my neck begging me not to take Paddy from her, till I give in and say she may have another chance . . . and so it goes on . . . and then this accident happened the other day."

"And now?"

"Now he's in the hospital—safe for a bit—if I ever get him back from it."

Like many Irishmen, Reilly took extreme views of every case. Louisa knew this: hadn't she heard his superlatives over his favourite silks, followed by tirades against others not so very different?

"Come," she said firmly, "you mustn't take such dark views; probably you'll have him all right again in a few weeks—but you must make some other arrangements for him;

it isn't fair to let him suffer."

"I must get rid of my wife," said Reilly tersely. Then, looking at Louisa, he added: "Pretty flat to put it like this, I suppose you think, but that sort of thing kills love—she killed mine long ago—I only want to be rid of her now. I'll send her to a Cure, or board her out in the country. I can't stand it any longer."

"You would be wise to arrange something of the kind," said Louisa. "But now, Mr. Reilly, you are going to take my advice—you're tired out with all this misery; make an effort to eat something before you start

business again."

He looked up with a forlorn smile, but the robust counsels of Louisa prevailed. With an adroit movement she lifted away the now tepid soup and substituted a few slices of the famous ham in its place.

"There, try that, and I think the salad is worth eating too, and you'll take a cup of coffee—you like it black, don't you?"

She slipped out of the room to order the coffee, leaving Reilly to pull himself together as well as he could.

* * * * *

That was the longest afternoon Louisa had ever known.

The heat was stifling, and perhaps this made the customers even more provoking than usual; they seemed to be deliberately trying to irritate her. It was all she could do not to call out some plain truths to them on their appearances and their clothes. How she longed to say quietly to one of them, "Yes, I'll do what you say, but nothing will make you look young or attractive now, you old fool." Or to another, "Your taste is atrocious, you had far better be guided by someone else." Or to a third, "You are a disagreeable old cat and no mistake." But instead of delivering these home truths, Louisa had to stand hour after hour in the stifling heat of the showrooms, bowing and smiling to everyone, never once relaxing her cheerful obliging manner for a moment, bright and alert and interested up to the blessed moment when the last customer was shown out!

But when the long day's work was done, when Louisa could thankfully discard the black satin livery of business and sit cool and easy in a kimono by the open window, then she had time to think at last over her conversation with Reilly and realise what it meant to her. A turning-point in life, that was what it was going to be, she told "For I won't go on seeing him constantly now if I can help it; I've no patience with all this running after married men-I'd as soon wear another woman's clothes as take up with her husband—sooner, a good bit," she said. Yet in the course of his business Reilly was often at Southington-on-Sea, and it was always his habit to come for a meal with her, so what could she do to break the habit? It would never do to stop these friendly relations without any apparent reason, especially after the confidence he had reposed in her. What could she do? It must be gradually done, that was plain. "I'll begin to talk about going out of business before very long, and when I've talked it over and over I'll do it—and then I'll never see him

again," she said.

Millie, all unconscious of the turmoil of feelings in her sister's heart, sat on the opposite side of the window, languidly turning over the pages of a fashion paper. She looked haggard and old.

"I do believe short skirts are going out before very long!" she exclaimed, flipping over the pages with an expression of weary

disgust.

"Let them! "Louisa snapped. "And for pity's sake stop thinking about skirts and styles, Millie; it's bad enough to be at it all day without keeping at it all evening

Millie vawned and flung down the paper. "I'm tired out: it's the heat: it does for me altogether—if you just felt my feet, Loo."

"I feel my own, and that's bad enough. Look here, Millie, aren't we fools to go on at this sort of thing much longer? Suppose we cut it all, and take a cottage in the country and never think about styles or appearances again?"

'Never think about styles or appearances again," Millie repeated slowly. "That's all very well, but what would we do all day,

Loo ? "

"Well, to begin with, neither of us would have aching feet-we'd wear wide, ugly shoes, and I'd just be stout without minding it any more. Then we would drop our shop manners and never need to flatter anyone again—we'd be done with humbug for ever, just be plain Millie and Loo Price, \mathbf{not} ` The Mesdames women, Price. Modistes.' '

"Well, and what then?" Millie asked,

"Oh, we might have a garden, and work in it; and I would cook our meals, and you would keep the house."

Millie, who was not entirely without malice, slipped in a significant remark at this point:

" Remember there would be no Mr. Reilly

to cook for then," she said.

"Oh, I don't know! Perhaps some of our old friends would look us up now and then," Louisa forced herself to say.

Millie smiled and yawned. "I can't say I think that sort of life sounds up to much. What's come over you, Loo? What's making you want to go and live in the country?"

Louisa gave a short laugh. "Restlessness, or perhaps a Breath from AboveI'm not sure which. I'm not satisfied with our life-are you?"

But Millie had none of the intellectual capacity of her sister; she shrugged her shoulders and laughed at this question.

"Oh, well, we're making a good bit of money, though it's in a worrying way. I don't know what more you want?"

"I want to be satisfied, and I'm not—if

you are, that's all right," said Louisa.

Millie considered for a minute. "It's true my nerves are all to bits, and I've no digestion to speak of; but I'd only think more about myself if I had all that time on my hands, and that wouldn't mend matters. And I don't see why living in the country would make you any more satisfied with life."

"Perhaps it wouldn't, but I'd like to try," said Louisa.

Millie shook her head. "No, no, no cottages in the country for me! If you're tired of business you can go to one alone and I'll take a partner and keep on here. Then when you're sick of your cottage and the country you can come back-it won't take you long to tire of them both, unless I'm much mistaken."

"Oh, I'm in no hurry," said Louisa, not very sincerely, "I was only considering the subject; perhaps in a year or two we might retire." In her heart of hearts she knew that she wanted to leave Southington as soon as possible; but Millie mustn't know this.

"Well-perhaps; a few years make a difference. Come, Loo, we'll go out to the Cinema—If Winter Comes is on this week —they say it's a sweet film."

"I don't feel equal to it to-night," said Louisa, "the heat has tired me out." She knew, and Millie knew, it wasn't the heat; but such fictions have often to be kept up

in family life.

"I'll go by myself and leave you to rest," Millie said, with one quick, suspicious glance at her sister. To herself she remarked: "Loo's vexed about something -something that Reilly said, whatever it was-she hasn't been like herself all afternoon-she'll be better left alone."

The long hot summer months crept past, each hotter than its predecessor: the glaring white asphalt pavement of the Esplanade seemed as if it might melt if the heat became more intense. The sea was tepid and calm as glass; it came slipping up against the shore like a flood of oil . . .

Jaded trippers lolled and sprawled in the sunshine, happy and unlovely. All the shops had sale-tickets in the windows and displayed piles of garments just a little out of date that nobody wanted to buy. dow-boxes filled with scorched flowers decorated the second storeys of the Esplanade -the so-called soil in which they were supposed to live having long ago been dried up into mere white dust. Air as stagnant as pond-water was all that reached the showrooms where Louisa and Millie at this off-season made a pretence of business. Most of the afternoon they stood about talking to each other, looking over dresses to be "marked down," raising the sunblinds to let in more air and then as hastily pulling them down again to exclude the fierce white light reflected up from the pavements below.

Both sisters were limp and weary; Millie's fatigue was bodily, but Louisa's was that of the spirit. "I'm tired out," said Millie. "I'm worse; I'm fed up," said

Louisa.

Millie looked at her almost anxiously, for this mood was very unlike Louisa.

"It's time you had a change, Loo," she said. "And happily it's August now; you'll be going off to Paris the first week of September."

"No—I don't think so—I'll let Paris alone this year."

"But what about the styles?—will you just risk the *ligne*?—are you quite sure about it?"

Louisa subsided on to one of the puffy divans reserved for the customers. From its depths she looked up at her sister with grave, weary eyes. "I don't care whether the fools are going to make the ligne straight or flared, or narrow or broad—it's all the same to me. I've lost interest in living this life, Millie, and I don't see any good reason for carrying on with it. I must try to find something else to do."

try to find something else to do."
"Bless me, Loo! This is dreadful—you
must be ill surely—I'll send for Dr. Masters

to come and see you."

"No, no, I'm quite well—quite. I've been thinking about giving up business for a long time—don't you remember I spoke to you about it weeks ago when the first hot weather began in spring?"

"Yes, I remember—that day Reilly came

to lunch, wasn't it?"

"Yes, about that time it must have been,"
Louisa answered evasively. "Well, I've
been turning it over in my mind ever since,

and now I've quite decided to try to find a cottage in the country and see if that won't suit me better."

"I think you're perfectly mad, Loo, to imagine you could live in the country after the bustling life you've had—I never heard such nonsense! Go off to Paris and see the fashions and you'll come back as fresh as paint," said Millie, and at that moment a

customer appeared.

In a trice Louisa had slipped on her business manner and was persuading the unhappy woman to invest in a magpie costume of black and white taffeta, which, said Louisa, she would never repent. It took some twenty minutes to conclude the bargain. Louisa slipped the money into her cash-box and smiled. "I never saw anyone less able to carry off a dress of the kind," she said. "But she wasn't worth dressing—you might have put anything you like on her, she would have looked exactly the same."

"And you told her it was just what she

wanted!" Millie jeered.

"I hadn't the heart to set to work on a face and figure like that—it needs enthusiasm for that sort of job—enthusiasm I haven't in me nowadays," Louisa snapped.

"Well, there'll soon be an end of our good business if you take no more interest in it," said Millie darkly. "I think the best I can do is to get Judy Hacker to come in as my partner, and let you go off to that old cottage of yours when you find it."

"Perhaps—well, it's getting on to six o'clock, and, thank goodness, another day's

done!" said Louisa.

The very next day Ambrose Reilly appeared. Louisa had not expected him; her heart leapt up with pleasure at his arrival, but in a moment she slipped on the armour of her business manner.

"Why, Mr. Reilly, we weren't looking for you so soon! And what have you got to show us to-day? Something very beau-

tiful, no doubt?", she said.

There was a new fabric, it seemed, which Reilly's firm had decided to specialise in—at least this was the ostensible reason for his call; but after the question of silks and satins had been gone into with great enthusiasm, he found an opportunity for a moment's quiet talk with Louisa:

"Just one moment, Miss Price," he began in a confidential undertone, "I was anxious to let you know—you were very kind that day in spring—I wished to tell you that I've got my boy home again very nearly well, and things are very much brighter. . . ." He hesitated and paused.

"Have you been able to make the arrangement you spoke about?" Louisa asked.

"Well, no: fact is, she got such a fright with Paddy's accident that she pulled herself together wonderfully—then I've got a nurse-girl to look after the child, the nicest little creature you can imagine, devoted to Paddy, so my mind is quite easy about him now."

"But a young girl—is she quite respon-

sible?" Louisa asked.

"Quite, quite—dearest little peach you can see—oh, we're going along swimmingly now."

"That's all right," said Louisa, a flat intonation in her voice. "I'm very glad indeed, Mr. Reilly."

With the mercurial nature of his race, Reilly was evidently as buoyant now as he had been despairing a few months ago. He laughed and joked and drove dull care away.

"And I suppose you will be starting off to Paris ere long, Miss Price?" he asked. The question gave Louisa the opportunity she had wanted.

"No; I am not going this autumn—the fact is, Mr. Reilly, I'm going out of business," she said quietly.

"Miss Price! You don't say so! Business, if you'll allow me to say so, will be deprived of one of its brightest ornaments!" he said, in his best bantering manner.

Louisa shook her head. "Oh no; business will get on very well without me—and besides, I expect my sister will keep on the business—she doesn't seem to feel the same wish to give it up that I do—younger of course."

"Come, come! The years sit too lightly on you to be mentioned . . ." Reilly began, but something in Louisa's face made him drop his gallant manner and come down to reality. "Joking apart, I'm awfully sorry, Miss Price—awfully—but if you can afford to go into private life and give up all the grind of business, you're much to be envied."

"I don't know, I'm sure; perhaps it may be a mistake," she answered slowly. "But it seems the wisest thing to do."

"Well—I give you joy—the best luck, Miss Price—but we'll meet again surely, before you give up?" he said, holding her hand in his old, affectionate way while he spoke.

"Yes. Oh yes, probably," Louisa fal-

tered. "I have a good deal to arrange, of course."

They were to meet again; but not as either of them expected.

That evening, as Louisa sat looking through the local paper, she noticed the advertisement of a cottage to let in the neighbourhood. It was at a village called Owlesford, some seven miles into the country at the back of Southington. A motorbus ran to Owlesford; the cottage was half a mile farther on.

"Millie, I'm going to-morrow afternoon to see a cottage at Owlesford," Louisa announced. The shop was shut on Wednesdays; it was her opportunity.

Millie yawned. "Well, if you want to see it, go; but I think you'll be glad enough to find yourself back here again by seven o'clock—these cottages are enough to give one the shivers—nothing but earwigs and caterpillars and rotting thatch."

"Sounds bright," Louisa admitted; "but

I'll soon see."

Now that she had made up her mind, Louisa was anxious to get the matter settled; the sooner the break was made the better. It was unlikely that the first cottage she went to see would be suitable; but she must begin the search.

Wednesday afternoon was fine, and Louisa started immediately after the shop closed, on her fateful expedition to Owlesford. The seven miles of jolting in the 'bus, inhaling fumes of petrol at every breath, were not pleasant; Louisa was glad when the village was reached, and she could get out into fresh country air. She had to fetch the key of the cottage from the tiny village shop, and then must walk the halfmile up the lane before arriving at the place. How quiet it was, how soft the road felt to pavement-weary feet! Louisa stood to listen to the silence all round about her; there wasn't a sound except some little hedge-bird twittering away hidden among the leaves. . . Louisa smiled and walked on. Could this ever be home to her, she wondered?

Here the cottage came in sight: very small, standing in a garden, a worn brick path leading up to the door, a big oak tree at one gable, a patch of flowers under the window, an orchard of mossy apple-trees below it. Louisa fitted the key into the lock and entered. The house felt damp and cold in spite of the warmth of the day. She passed from one room to another,

trying to image life as lived there; she looked out through the little windows and thought how dark the place would be in bad weather. There was a seat in the

had overwhelmed her sitting thus in the dismantled dwelling-place: "For," she sobbed, "it's not the poor little empty house, it's my poor empty life—there's

nothing real in it, nothing that

matters to anyone else."

A tantalising vision of what life might have been even here swept over her—yes, even here, given the one thing needful. If she could have lived here with the man she loved she wouldn't have wanted anything finer or better. "I would have been content and happy—and I would have had children, and then my life would have gone on

then my life would have gone on "" Well-I give you joy-the best luck,

"" Well—I give you joy—the best luck, Miss Price—but we'll meet again surely, before you give up?' he said, holding her hand."

window niche of the living-room, and Louisa sat down to look out into the garden, then suddenly she leant her head on her hands and began to cry. A sense of desolation even after I had ceased to be... Why" (and here Louisa actually broke into a derisive laugh), "Why, I have never even introduced a new fashion, far less been

responsible for a new life! Here I am, a woman over forty who has done nothing worth doing, and hasn't even had the luck to fall in love with a man she could marry! I've wasted years of life on a stout unheroic man, too fond of eating, and another woman's husband into the bargain—fool that I was!"

Wiping her eyes, Louisa looked round the bleak little room again: "Well, I'd get out of the drive and worry and humbug of business at least if I came here," she thought, "and peace is worth a good deal if you can't get anything else." She rose and went to the door and stood looking out into the garden: "I'll fill it with flowers, and I'll whitewash the house inside and out, and make it bright and clean—oh, it'll all be very cheerful on the outside sure enough when I've had my hands on it for a bit," she said with a rueful smile. cottage will do as well as another to experiment with. I'll see if I can make a better thing of life here than in Southington." Her resolution was taken; she would come to Owlesford.

The return motor-'bus was late. Louisa had to stand waiting for it at the cross-roads for a full quarter of an hour. When she got into it at last, she found herself sitting next to Millie's friend Miss Judy Hacker, a very urban and modish young woman dressed in the extreme of fashion.

"Good evening," said Louisa. "You've been out in the country like me, I see?"

"Yes, as far as Beeminster—horrid and jolty these 'buses are," said Miss Hacker, "and the heat and smell of petrol too——"She paused and added: "A shocking business this about poor Mr. Reilly—you'll have seen the news, I suppose?"

Louisa leant forward; her heart seemed

to stop beating for a moment.

"I—no—I haven't seen the evening papers—what's wrong with him?" she managed to say, with all the self-command she had learned in the hard school of the showroom.

"Nearly burned to death—see, there's the paper, you can read about it. I always liked Mr. Reilly somehow—had a way with him, you know," said Miss Hacker, passing a crumpled copy of the newspaper into Louisa's shaking hand. But Louisa could not at that moment see to read.

"I've forgotten my glasses," she said, leaning back against the bumping seat of the 'bus. Everything swam before her eyes for a moment.

"Oh, it's a very sad story," Miss Hacker

said. "He came home and found his house at Suburbtown in a blaze and the child at a top window calling out to be helped and no one able to get to him. It seems he dashed right through the flames and carried the boy down wrapped in his coat, and then collapsed. They say the mother must have been asleep—(they found her suffocated by the smoke afterwards)—and the nurse had gone out—(just what these girls would do)—I didn't know Reilly was a married man—did you?"

"Yes—oh yes, I've known that for a long time," said Louisa. "What a dreadful thing to happen. . . . Poor Mr. Reilly.

. . . But I think I must go and sit nearer the door, the smell of petrol is too much for me altogether." She must be alone, away from the comments and exclamations of Miss Hacker, who was of the race that loves horrors.

But solitude is in such circumstances almost always impossible to arrive at. The moment the 'bus stopped Louisa met another acquaintance and had to talk to her all the way home. Once there, she found Millie waiting, eager to expatiate upon the Reilly tragedy in all its aspects.

"Awful—to be burnt to death—and he so good-looking—the paper says 'very little hope of recovery is entertained'—that pro-

bably means none at all."

Louisa shuddered. "Don't speak about it any more, Millie—it's too horrible. I always liked Mr. Reilly—I can't bear to think of it."

Millie was in a nasty temper: she did not approve of the cottage scheme; did not wish her sister to leave the business, which certainly would not prosper when her clever wits were not directing it. With a shrug of her shoulders Millie turned away, saying:

"If you spoke the truth, Loo, you would say that you had been in love with him for

vears."

Louisa was too unhappy at that moment to be angry. She looked up at Millie with a world of sadness in her eyes. "Yes, I think I have loved him for a long time," she said quietly.

Millie came and stood beside her, struck by something that was unusual in Louisa's manner. It was really the unapproachable dignity that is born of genuine grief.

"And you knew he was married all the

time?" she asked curiously.

"Not all the time, Millie—only since that day in spring when he came to lunch here.



"'He dashed right through the flames and carried the boy down wrapped in his coat."

I never knew till then. I used to wonder why he didn't ask me to marry him. He

and I were great friends."

"Too bad," said Millie, "letting a woman like you waste her whole life that way." She came and laid her hand on her sister's shoulder now with a kindly gesture. Louisa smiled.

"I don't think it was wasted after all. I'd rather have cared for him than not," she said. "A few hours ago I was saying to myself just what you've said; but now it's

different."

"Why?" Millie asked, surprised.

"Because I see I haven't loved a man of straw after all—see what he did—splendid!"

"Loo, you're queer—very queer," said Millie in a perplexed voice; she could not understand this point of view in the least.

There was a short silence, and then

Louisa announced:

"I'm going to Suburbtown to-morrow morning by the first train, so you'll have to manage everything in the shop by yourself. It has just occurred to me that if he's still alive there is something I can do to help him. If he is able to see me I'll arrange about it."

"What is it?" Millie asked in amaze-

ment.

"Oh, I'll tell you to-morrow when I come back. Give me the railway guide; I must look up my trains. Suburbtown is on the Great Western, isn't it?" She turned over the bewildering pages of the Guide with a practised hand, running down the columns with her forefinger till she found the train she wanted. "Yes, here it is—8.30, reaches Suburbtown 11.5. I'll need breakfast at 7, and I can see to a good many things before I start, not to leave you with too much on your hands."

Millie gazed at her sister—she seemed to be all at once inspired by a new purpose, a

tremendous energy.

"What new idea is this she's got into her head?" she wondered, and then asked again: "What is it, Loo?"

"Just something that may comfort him,"

Louisa answered.

She had taken down the ledgers and was beginning to look them through as if nothing had happened.

* * * * *

There were screens round Ambrose Reilly's bed in the hospital ward, so Louisa was practically alone with him when she passed in behind their shelter. She took only one glance at him, masked as he was in cottonwool, before she knelt down so as to bring her face on a level with his.

He turned slightly on the pillow.

"Who is it?" he said.

"It's Loo Price," she answered.
"Can't speak . . . " he muttered.

"No; don't try to. I came to speak to you. Just to say that I want to have Paddy to look after until you are well again." There was such a long interval of silence then that Louisa thought he had not taken in what she said. Was her errand going to fail? She held her breath and waited that he should reply. At last the words came haltingly from his lips.

"Never be well again . . ."

"Then I'll keep Paddy always for you," she whispered.

Another silence before he spoke again.

"I have . . . no money . . ." he said.
"I have plenty—I'll see about that—only give him to me to have for my own," Louisa urged.

"Yes," he muttered—that was all.

Louisa sat down then to watch beside him. It was the only thing that was left for her to do. Hour after hour went by. Reilly neither spoke nor stirred. A nurse slipped in every now and again and held a cup to his lips or moved him.

Once more he spoke before the end:

"God bless you, Louisa," he said. For the first and the last time he called her by her name.

This was the end of all Louisa's talk about

going out of business.

When she had obtained legal possession of the boy Paddy from an impecunious married aunt who was only too delighted to renounce him into her competent hands, Louisa turned back with tremendous energy to her old life. There was no talk now of weariness or dissatisfaction. The house was turned upside down immediately for the accommodation of the little intruder; as neither Louisa nor Millie had time to look after him, a nurse had to be found and a nursery prepared for his reception. Expenses grew like mushrooms; but the strange thing was that as each fresh outlay became necessary, Louisa found herself planning fresh business ventures with which to meet them.

"I never saw anything like you, Miss Price," said an old customer. "To think that you should start a millinery branch with all that you have on your hands clready!"

"Ah, madam!" said Louisa with a dark little smile, "you see I haven't only myself to provide for nowadays—perhaps you didn't know that I have adopted the son of an old friend lately?"

"No, indeed! Why, Miss Price, isn't that something of a burden to you? A boy's education is such an expense?"

"I never felt less burdened, madam," said Louisa. "Although I haven't had much

to do with children, I seem able to manage Paddy."

"A little Irishman?" the customer

questioned.

"Yes, madam: a little Irishman, and as his poor father would have said, 'A very broth of a boy,' "said Louisa with a smile of deep satisfaction. A moment later she added a remark which the customer thought rather stupid: "Strange, isn't it, madam, how a child fills up every corner of an empty house?"

A SONG OF APPLES.

THERE was never fruit that played Such a part in myth and story; Apple, dragon, lovely maid,
Share the ancient heroes' glory.

Apple trees were wildings when Romans came with garden lore, Taught their skill to British men, Left them richer than before.

All about the Devon village
Herrick lived in long ago,
Apple orchards lure to pillage
Urchins passing to and fro.

Herrick sang of rarer fruit, Cherry Ripe and "Apricock"; I would humbly follow suit, Praise the sturdy apple stock,

Yielding blossom, white and pink, Codling, Russet, Pippin, Sweeting; Apples for a harvest drink, Others for ambrosial eating.

When our English store has dwindled, Kinsfolk send from overseas Apples which the sun has kindled While they hung on laden trees.

Here are apples like our own,
Gold and crimson—only try them!
All in Empire orchards grown,
Fine and sweet ones—come and buy them!
MURIEL KENT.



A DISTINCTION-AND A DIFFERENCE.

LONGSHOREMAN (to visitor): Of course, this ain't our natural population—only the floating population, so to speak.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE MYSTERY.

By W. E. Richards.

WE first met Sir Roderic Rumbledown at a Grindelwald hotel during a week of rain and mist, when holiday-makers wandered about asking foolish questions of the concierge and tapping the German barometer. One by one we sought oblivion in the pile of old magazines in the reading-room. It was there we met Sir Roderic Rumbledown.

He had come to a bad end even then and was lying face downward in a pool of blood on the study floor. Of course, having found the baronet in that predicament, we had to read on. We devoured the first page breathlessly. Overleaf, I regret to say, the baronet had disappeared without a trace and a titled lady was telling us how to make an economical cake.

"Take six eggs—" she said coolly, just as if no baronet was huddled in a pool of blood on the floor above.

"I don't like it," I said. "This is callous even for the nobility. I suspect she knows." "Never," declared Nina. "We may have got on the wrong page. Please turn back."

We had. At the foot of the first page, just when the knob of the door turned noiselessly, we read, "Continued on page 358." We turned feverishly to page 358, where we found, "Have you tried Teresa's Tonic for Tired Hair?" but no Sir Roderic. Farther on we found mouth washes, disinfectants, radiators, records, and silk

stockings, but the baronet had been spirited away. Not even a dull-red stain on the study floor was left. Page 358, we discovered, had been torn out.

We searched the whole pile of magazines, greedily snatching the papers as the visitors put them down. We demanded page 358 from the concierge and reduced him to guttural German. Probably he was establishing an alibi.

Every minute of enforced idleness was spent in unravelling the mystery surrounding Sir Roderic's demise. If only one of the "Bigs" from Scotland Yard had been in Grindelwald——!

Besides the titled lady who said, while the body was still warm upstairs, "Take six eggs," the synopsis gave the names of Alec Whimple, the Duchess of Bordington, Carlo Brunesci, and a few others. I don't think Whimple had done it. He sounded a simple West country fellow. Suspicion was bound to fall on Brunesci, but there was a faithful dog-like sound about his first name which might save him from the gallows.

I acquitted the Duchess at sight. Her Grace may have annihilated Sir Roderic with her lorgnette, but she would not have left him in a pool of blood on the study floor. She would have ordered the butler to remove the body and then called no trumps without turning a hair. Aristocracy is like that.

We left Grindelwald without unravelling the

mystery, but we boarded the Paris Express in good spirits. Possibly some world-famous pathologist might be on the train. We were doomed to disappointment.

"We will see the editor the moment we reach London," declared Nina, who is afraid of no man

when she is on the trail of crime.

Unfortunately the paper had ceased publication two years before, and we could discover neither editor nor files.

"There will be files at the Free Library," said Nina.



TOURIST: Aye ye got change for a pound, mon? PORTER (cheerfully): Yes, sir!

TOURIST: A weel, ye'll no miss the wee bit I was goin' to gie ye!

"Let's write to the author," suggested Nina But we had forgotten his name.

We spent twelve months in searching for the baronet's murderer.

And then in a little sun-washed Italian village where we were spending our next holiday we saw a cinema bill announcing the star film, "Rodrigo Rumbledonio" (or something like that).

In a fever of impatience we awaited the dusk, flung down a five lira note, and received the welcome of a foreign prince and his bride. The

smell of garlic and human flesh drifted up to our balcony. Incredibly ancient films flickered and faded out.

At last the title "Rodrigo Rumbledonio" (or something like that) flashed on the screen. We groped for each other's hands and our hearts thumped in excitement.

There was Sir Roderic, dark, suave, sinister. The nice boy, we decided, must be Peter Whimple. Here came our friend the Duchess, complete with lorgnette. More sub-titles in Italian and more flickers. A horrid sizzling from the operating box.

At last! Prone on the study floor lay the body of Sir Roderic. A black pool slowly spread across the carpet. A moment more and we should know.

At that instant the operating box burst into flames, and we fought our way to the open air.

We shall never know who killed Sir Roderic.



OH, REALLY.

1ST FRIEND: I found him a very decent fellow; he comes from Dublin and his name is O'Reilly.

2ND FRIEND: Oh, really. 1st Friend: No, O'Reilly.

2nd Friend: O'Reilly. Oh, really.

1st Friend: Well, have it which way you

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"Dad," asked Edgar, "will you please buy me a drum for my birthday?"

"But, Edgar," protested Dad, "you would

disturb me very much if I did."

"Oh no, dad," the child hastened to explain. "I'll drum only when you are asleep."

THE GENTLE ART.

By Keston Hayes.

From The Daily Dithyramb.

Monday.

Our Post-bag.

Sir,-

Can any reader give me the origin and meaning of the phrase, "Ginger, you're balmy"? Yours, etc.,

INNOCENT.

Tuesday.

Our Post-bag.

Sir.

I would like to point out to "Innocent" that he (or she) is confusing two totally distinct terms. The colloquialism for "weak-headed" is spelt not Balmy but Barmy. See Sleuth's Wednesday.

Our Post-bag.

Sir.-

May I be permitted to challenge the statement of Prof. Shinwell Pole that several of his students are ginger-haired? The tint popularly miscalled by that name is usually a sort of flamerusset, or else merely a bright auburn. True ginger does not exist in 1 per cent of cases, and hardly ever in Western Europe. See "Hirsute Ethnology," Vol. 9, Appendix P, by Crow.

Yours, etc.,

A. KIDLING GAMMON (F.Z.S.).

Sir. -

It will perhaps be of interest to your correspondents to know that once, in the spring of 1889, when I was crossing the fearful Bogyhole



AN UNATTRACTIVE SPREAD.

Wife: For Heaven's sake, George, do try an' not look as if you'd been spread out to dry!

"Pocket Dictionary for Predatory Purists," price $4\frac{1}{2}d$.

Yours, etc.,

SHELLRIM GIGLAMP.

Sir.-

Can nothing be done to stop this coarse and silly habit of pointing ridicule at people's physical characteristics? The expression concerning the mental poise of the ginger-haired is quite new to me, but several of my students, having that feature in common, are among my most valuable workers. I would never think of saying such a thing to one of them.

I am, Sir, Yours, etc., (Prof.) SHINWELL POLE, Excelsior, Oxbridge.

Mountains of Zanzibar, in company with my father and Dr. Horatio Smithe, our provisions were reduced to one small packet of crystallised ginger. We were obliged to smear our feet and faces with this to protect ourselves from the intense cold. I well recall my dear father saying, in his jocular way, "This is hot stuff." It was three days before we encountered a party of wallahs (natives) who gave us a b'goodblowout (hot meal). I can also remember how misty it was on the morning of our old Queen's Jubilee. Dr. Horatio Smithe has been in Uganda many years now.

I remain,

Yours sincerely, (Miss) Agnes Shelley Swinnyson. Thursday. Sir,—

Our Post-bag.

I can corroborate from my own unfortunate experience Mr. Gammon's statement that it is almost impossible to find true ginger in Western Europe. Before the War we could get it, and also red cayenne pepper and Senegalese coffee at reasonable prices. Like everything else, it has either gone up or disappeared. I have always found that a few caraway-seeds sprinkled among the oatmeal make porridge more appetising and nutritious, yet here in Wimbledon it is next to impossible to obtain them. Perhaps Mr. Gammon could help me?

Yours, etc.,

MOTHER OF EIGHT.

Hebrides, never contains caraway-seeds. The porridge is mixed with plain oatmeal and seawater, simmered ten hours over a peat fire, and afterwards matured in stone jars for three years. Served with a little haddock broth it is delicious.

Yours, etc.,

HILARY ROLLS-AXMINSTER.

Sir,-

I can only say that Prof. Shinwell Pole mistakes bald and blatant assertion for evidence, and displays all the crude obscurantism and ignorant self-satisfied pomposity we learn to expect from gentlemen of merely classical miseducation. Happily, Science can afford to ignore such antagonists. I merely repeat there



MAN AND SUPERMAN.

"What made him marry her?"

"She did."

Sir,—

In reference to Mr. A. Kidling Gammon's letter, I wish to assert that six at least of my students are definitely and undeniably ginger-haired. Yours, etc.,

(Prof.) Shinwell Pole.

Friday.

Our Post-bag.

Sir,—

I am sure "Mother of Eight" will pardon me for pointing out that the good old-fashioned porridge, as eaten in my old home in the Outer are no true ginger heads in this hemisphere. See Plutt's "Outline of the Big Idea."

Yours, etc.,

A. KIDLING GAMMON (F.Z.S.).

Saturday.

Our Post-bag.

Sir.-

Could any reader tell me the origin and meaning of the phrase, "Ginger, you're balmy"?

Yours, etc.,

Innocent.

(This correspondence is now closed.—Editor.)

EAU. By Irvine Foster.

OF all the American tourists we had met on the Continent in the last few years there were few who allowed their respect for the Nineteenth Amendment to interfere with the proper enjoyment of their holidays. So we were not really prepared for the couple whom we only knew as Mr. and Mrs. Hank from Illinois when they arrived at the hotel where we were staying at Dinard.

It was obvious from their encounter with the head waiter when he showed them to the table next to ours that their French was-well, rather rusty; and as we knew that the hotel staff had no English, we awaited developments with curiosity. After the soup plates had been removed, the head waiter approached and placed

Mrs. Hank, who was more familiar with the French idiom than her husband, came to his

"You always have to say some water or some butter or some cheese, Hank dear," then continued, "Doh! de oh pour boire."

The head waiter brightened up considerably at the last two words, thinking no doubt that, however unintelligent these Yankees might be, they had at last mustered the one French word that really mattered. He smiled amiably and stood by hopefully.

"Doh. Oh. Doh," repeated Hank.

"Doh, Doh, De Oh," echoed Mrs. Hank, and then, schoolgirl memories surging back into her brain. "De loh."

"Deloh," chorused Hank, waving an empty glass in the air.



THE MARCH OF PROGRESS.

"There seem to be fewer lights here than they used to have."

"Yes, they've improved the place a lot lately."

the wine list in front of Hank with a flourish. "Qu'est ce que vous allez boire, m'sieur?" we heard him murmur.

This apparently was the moment for which Mr. Hank had been waiting ever since leaving home. He drew himself up proudly, waved away the wine list and exclaimed "Oh" in a subdued but determined voice. We listened enraptured to the ensuing dialogue.

"Pardon, m'sieur. Qu'est ce que vous desirez Du cidre, du vin, de la bière, comme boisson?

du whiskey?"

"Water, water. Oh. Oh." Hank was getting peeved.

"Mais m'sieur-?" The head waiter shrugged his shoulders in despair.

"De l'eau," repeated the head waiter, beaming, "certainement m'sieur, de l'eau; un Vittel, un Vichy, un Evian?"

"Can't you tell him that we don't want his vile foreign concoctions? All we want is a lil' drinking water," said Hank.
"Delo fresh, delo fresh, iced if possible,"

chanted his obedient wife.

" Ah! pardon m'sieur, pardon madame, M'sieur desire de maintenant je comprends. l'eau fraîche, de l'eau naturelle, de l'eau simple."

He paled a little at the thought of anyone wanting to drink the eau naturelle of the district, especially with good cider at only 3 francs the litre. But he went on to express his desolation that although there was eau courante in

REMARKABLE SKIN HEALING OFFER

Famous Old Herbal Remedy known as "The Skin Doctor"

20,000 TEST TUBES ON PUBLIC TRIAL

NO-DAY 20,000 Test Tubes (with "Directions Booklet") of one of the finest of the "Old English" skin healing remedies now again being made and used with phenomenal success is here publicly offered on trial to all who need its unique curative aid.

Long before the days of doctors and hospitals, the people had knowledge of and used certain wonderful home-made remedies. Some of these possessed curative properties which have never been rivalled by modern science in the healing

Bad Legs — Sore Places — Open Wounds — Poisoned Skin - Abscesses — Cuts — Bruises — Burns Sprains — Scalds — Boils — Carbuncles - Corns - Hemorrhoids Varicose Ulcers—Sunburn (painful) Insect Bites—Earache—Ringworm.

This skin healing ointment is again becoming known far and wide under its Old English name of "The Skin Doctor Ointment."

Everyone Welcome to a Test Tube.

Everyone is welcome to try either the Free Trial Tube or one of the larger size, 1/3, 3/- or 5/- Tins, under its proper name of "Robb's Herbaline Ointment," on the most generously fair terms that ensure satisfaction to all. Everyone sending for either of the sale sizes can do so on the distinct understanding that he or she is free to use up to half the contents of the tin. Then, if the results from the half-used tin are not highly satisfactory to the user, the tin containing the unused half can be returned to the manufacturers, who will thereupon

With every tin will be a "Directions Booklet." Follow these directions, and the rapid curative results will amaze and please you.

promptly refund the price originally paid

Why this "Skin Doctor" Ointment is so Wonderful a Healer.

Why is there so much talk of "Vitamins"

to-day? Doctors and scientists are acknowledging and emphasising their importance.

It is the same vital health elements of Nature that have re-won for Robb's Herbaline Ointment its homely old title of "The Skin Doctor Ointment." There is something in Nature's herbs that outrivals man's science.

In the olden times the wounds of the fighting men were quickly healed with herbal ointments. Life in those days was lived amid many dangers to life and limb. It was the housewives who treasured the recipes and made and used the remedies that healed. There were no doctors and no hospitals.

A Straight Talk and a Fair Offer.

Are you one of the many whose skin troubles modern remedies have failed to put right? What is the use of continuing with such treatments? Try Robb's Herbaline Ointment, and you, too, will hail it as "The Skin Doctor Ointment," Then keep your tin handy in your home. Accidents will happen—if not to yourself, to some others of your household. Treat them with Robb's Herbaline Ointment and bind it up with a clean bandage. See and feel how quickly this treatment will heal skin troubles of all kinds from the slightest to the most serious.

Do not run the risk of septic poisoning. A tin of Robb's Herbaline Ointment costs so little, and may save you so much. Send for a Free Trial Tube or a 1/3, 3/- or 5/- Tin (postage 3d. extra on either size). Post this:-

PUBLIC TEST OFFER CGUPON

To PHILLIPS & ROBSON, LTD.,

81, Turnmill Street, London, E.C.1.

Sirs,—Please send me a Free Test Tube of "Robb's Herbaline Ointment." I enclose 3d. stamps, towards packing, postage, etc., with "Directions Booklet." (or) Please send me a large 1/3, 3/- or 5/- Tin (postage 3d. extra), with "Directions Booklet."

Name	
Address	

for the full tin.

every bedroom there was no eau potable in the hotel, that it would be necessary to send out to the "source" for some, that on behalf of M. the proprietor he offered a thousand excuses for the unavoidable delay.

The Hanks seemed to be bewildered by this flood of oratory and did not attempt reply. The head waiter gave instructions to an underling, who fetched a water-bottle from the depths of a wooden cupboard, dusted it carefully and

We felt sorry for the Hanks. The underling seemed to be a long time getting the water and it was obvious that they were thirsty. Once we noticed Hank's eyes wander covetously over to the fine array of bottles on the sideboard, but his wife's reproachful glance soon brought him back to earth again. Neither of them seemed to be enjoying their meal; and after the fish, in fact, they are very little except dry



PASS!

MAJOR PEPPER (to cadging tramp): But I've just given something to a man not a hundred yards away.

TRAMP: Oh! that's all right then, sir,—'e's my partner!

went out into the street, whistling and swinging the bottle as he walked.

The fish that evening happened to be salt herring, the entiée was more highly seasoned than usual, the veal we thought a little rich, and the pommes de terres frites rather dry. But the apricot preserve was delicious; just sweet enough to justify our opening another bottle of Chablis.

We were just leaving the table when the garçon reappeared, rather breathless, but without the waterbottle. There was a muttered conference in the corner. the underling explaining with many expressive gestures, the head waiter obviously finding it difficult to do justice to his feelings in the pub-

lic gaze. We looked back as we went out of room. head waiter was bending low, a living embodiment of apology. We caught the words "Pardon m'sieur," then, "laisser tomber sur le trottoir," "cassée," and finally, "mille pardons, m'sieūr." The explanation was lost on the Hanks, but their patience was at last exhausted.

"Du cidre," we heard Mrs. Hank whisper in a shamefaced voice as we shut the door.

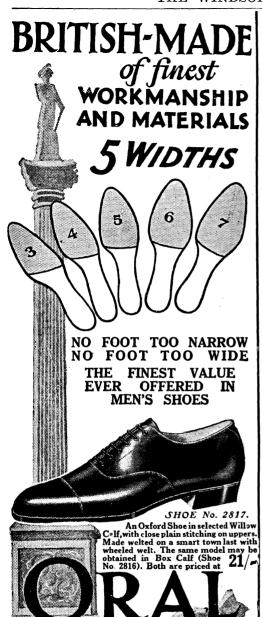
But there was nothing shamefaced or whispered about Hank's simple cry of

"Vin" which followed us down the corridor. Something will have to be done about this water question if America and France are to

remain friends.

& 용용

An American scientist has discovered that earth-worms sing. It is probably this habit which attracts the early bird.



Oral shoes are obtainable from most good shoe shops. If there is not an Oral agent in your town, write to address below.

UALITY SHOES

C. W. HORRELL, LTD.
(SHOEMAKERS),
RUSHDEN, NORTHANTS.

BUY BRITISH FOOTWEAR.

Novel Beauty Hints BY MIMOSA.

My advice to smart women, who demand the very best results, is to leave most toilet preparations alone. When facial applications are necessary, get only the pure ingredients just as they come to the chemist himself. I will tell you in this column from time to time just what to get and how to use it. Do not be persuaded into buying some cheap toilet preparation. Any chemist can supply you with genuine concentrated ingredients, and I know that most firms make a speciality of selling original packages of all kinds of pure ingredients, both direct and by post. I can point out to you, however, many useful hints, which involve no expense at all.

"Grey Hair."—I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of one ounce of concentrate of tammalte mixed with four ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally.

"Blackheads and Enlarged Pores."—The sparkling face-bath treatment is the most pleasant and effective method of overcoming this trouble. Get a few stymol tablets from your chemist, and dissolve one in a cup of hot water. Dab the face with the lotion and the blackheads will pop out and the large pores close up and efface themselves quite naturally.

"'Wavy' Shampoo."—You do not brush your hair enough, nor wash it enough. A delightful shampoo, which also has a tendency to make straight hair wavy, besides cleansing the scalp and making the hair soft, fluffy and glossy, can easily be made at home. Get a package of stallax and dissolve one teaspoonful in a cup of hot water for each shampoo.

teaspoontuin a cup of not water for each snampoo.

""Face-peeling at Home."—Your questions re "face-peeling" are typical of hundreds received lately. I. Do not allow your face to be "operated" upon by anyone without the attendance and advice of your own surgeon. 2. Yes, it is possible to peel your face, in a minor way, at home, thus clearing your complexion without inconvenience. I have seen extremely satisfactory results. Get an ounce of pure mercolized wax and apply it nightly like cold cream. This substance has the peculiar power of absorbing all worn or lifeless tissue, but does not affect healthy tissue. It is a so used for removing freckles, tan and blotches. It slowly absorbs the half-dead, sickly, unsightly outer film, thus revealing the fresh young vigorous complexion underneath.

"Superfluous Hair."—Your question is a common one. The quickest and safest way to remove superfluous hair is to apply a little sipolite. Get about half an ounce from the chemist and mix a little into a paste with a few drops of water and apply directly to the hair, which then shrivels up and can be rubbed off after two or three minutes, leaving no trace.

"Colour Without Rouge."—I should judge your pallor to be natural and nothing to worry about. Women of refinement who shrink from rouge often use ordinary colliandum instead, because it cannot be detected if the least care is taken in applying it with the finger-tips.

"A Novel Remedy for Obesity."—The figure can be restored to its original graceful slimness without any trouble or injury to the health, and without the knowledge of one's dearest friends. Three clynol berries, taken one after each meal, will quickly and permanently remove not only the outward signs of the disease, the superabundant flesh, but will overcome the unnatural desire of the digestive organs to create fatty matter. Most chemists keep a few in stock.

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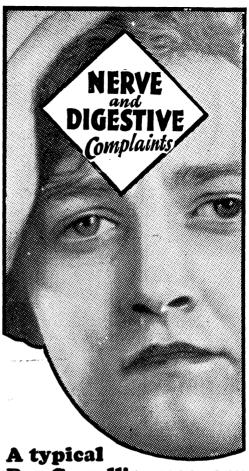
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The Mindsor Magazine.

No. 405.

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At reduced postage rate to Canada, 13s. 6d.

Binding Cases for half-yearly volumes can be obtained through any bookseller at 1s. 6d.

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903.

Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by the Canadian Magazine Post.

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'LEFT, RIGHT ... LEFT, RIGHT ...

... and left right when put to bed!

UP and down the young army goes. There'll be a mock battle soon when Dick and Molly invade the "fort." And then Nurse will come and collect the combatants and pack them off to bed.

They'll be bathed first. They'll be bathed with Wright's. Mother is very particular about Wright's: she won't have

Wright's; she won't have any other soap in the bathroom. She knows that Wright's does more than cleanse the skin. It protects from infection—a risk every child runs in rough and tumble play. And so the kiddies go to bed all fresh and sweet and safeguarded in health.

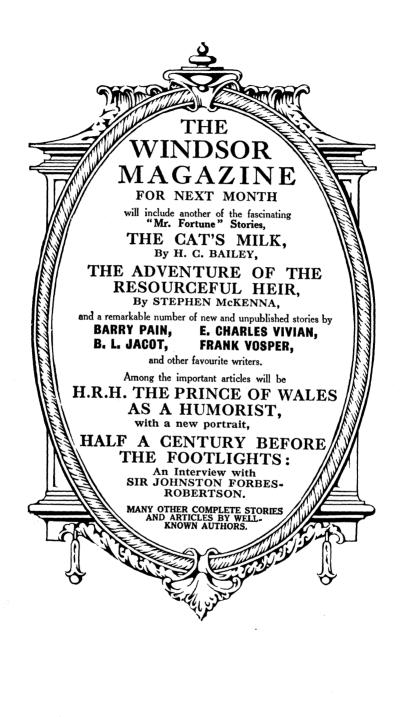
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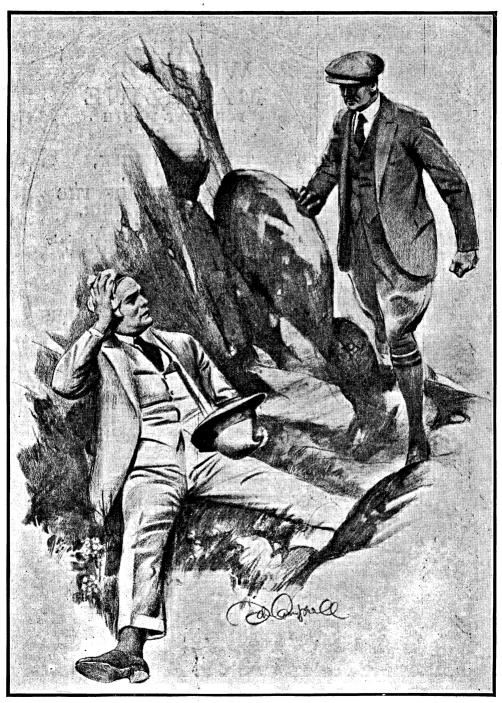


WRIGHTS

COAL TAR
SOAP







"Stein came in long strides. 'I have found him, Fortune. He is dead. Come and see.' " (See page 391.)



"'I want a hazel ice,' said Reggie Fortune. 'The others were only water ices. One of those nut things is clearly indicated.'

THE HAZEL ICE

By H. C. BAILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

HEY were eating ices at one of those pleasant places of "restauration" which hide from Interlaken among

To describe the case scientifically, Mrs. Fortune was eating an ice and Reggie Fortune was eating ices. That eminent expert of the Swiss police, Herr Stein, drank coffee and smoked a cigar. The white shoulder of the Jungfrau shone clear. The day was delectably hot, but something of the freshness of the high pastures was in the genial air.

"I want a hazel ice," said Reggie Fortune.
"My dear child!" Mrs. Fortune's charming hands went up. She counted on her fingers.

No. No. I've only had two. Peaches aren't an ice. And the others were only water ices. One of those nut things is clearly indicated." He looked firmly at his wife. "I do want a hazel ice, Joan."

And then Adrian Trove arrived.

There was somebody at every table. None of them showed any desire to make room for the shabby, dusty man with a bandage round his head.

Mrs. Fortune has an incurable weakness for lame dogs. "There's a place here," she

said gently.

"Thanks awfully." Adrian Trove dropped into it. "Awful shame to bother you. I'm just down from Mürren. Going on to Kandersteg. There isn't a train. I just wanted some tea."

Reggie was looking at him with some curiosity. "Have you had a fall, sir?"

"It's nothing. I was knocked over by a

fall of stones."

"So." Herr Stein sympathised. "That is nasty luck. The best climbers, they cannot escape that." The tea came and Adrian Trove drank eagerly.

"Have you had a doctor look at your

head?" said Reggie.

"No. Just tied it up. It's nothing." He gulped his tea. "I must get on. I had a man with me and I don't know what's happened to him. We were crossing from Mürren to Kandersteg and there was a fall of stones that laid me out. When I came to, I couldn't find Butler anywhere. I went back to Mürren to get help. We've searched the whole place. Not a sign of him. So I thought he might have gone on down to Kandersteg."

"You know you'd better let me take you

up in my car," said Reggie.

Trove made civil, stumbling objections, was talked down, and Reggie went for the car.

"Madame permits?" Stein bowed.

"You want to go with him?" said Mrs. Fortune.

"Yes. Perhaps." He ran for a coat, and struggling into it reached the car as they started.

Under Reggie's hand the big car had the abandon of a taxi of Paris. He was not thereby hampered in conversation with Mr. Adrian Trove: a very interesting conversation.

Mr. Trove was by trade a chemist, assistant to the eminent consulting chemist, Dr. Hardy Butler. They had come to Switzerland on holiday together. They were to spend some time with that potentate of the chemical industry, Sir Samuel Ulyett, who was staying at the Bristol at Kandersteg. Dr. Butler was a veteran mountaineer. He proposed to train Adrian Trove and began

with some easy passes. They went from Kandersteg over the Tschingel Glacier to Mürren, slept there, and were on their way back by the Hohturli to Kandersteg when the stones fell and Butler vanished.

The car climbed along a ledge above the river into forest. Round corkscrew curves it whirled up into a broad space between mountains, and stopped at an hotel, very new and green and white.

Trove got out stiffly. "Thanks very much, Mr. Fortune. Excuse me, won't

you? I want to find out——"

"Why, Adrian!" A girl came to him.

"Where's Doctor Butler ?"

Trove stopped and stared at her. She was a small plump creature with a chin. Black hair struggled into curls above a dark face.

"Let's get in, Ruth. I must see your father." He hurried into the hotel, she at his heels.

Herr Stein leaned to Mr. Fortune. "We drink beer, my friend?" he suggested.

In the hall they found Trove standing before a little plump man, plainly the girl's father. And he stumbled through the tale which he had told Mr. Fortune. . . . "Eh, that's bad," puckered eyes stared at Trove. "And you never saw what came to the old lad, the way you tell it?"

"He must have been carried away by the stones. When I came to there wasn't a

sign of him."

"But you've had men seeking t'other

side, eh, and they found nought?"

"Nothing at all, sir. Not a trace. I thought he must have lost me and come on here. We must search up from this side, sir. I came round as quickly as I could. We ought to get busy at once."

Mr. Fortune put down his beer and stood up. "I say, Trove, I'm afraid you may want me. Your friend's been lying out

rather a long time."

Trove stared, not with goodwill. "Oh, thanks. Thanks very much. This is Sir Samuel Ulyett, Mr. Fortune."

"I'm a surgeon, sir," Reggie explained.

"I might be some use, you know."

"I'll thank you kindly. If there's aughtyou can do. We've to find the old lad first." He bustled away to the office. The landlord was already in the hands of Herr Stein.

Sir Samuel's slow effort to explain himself subsided before the landlord's flow of words. But yes, an accident, most distressing. A search must be arranged at once. Yes, everything should be done, Sir Ulyett might

be sure. By great good fortune, here was Herr Stein of the greatest experience. With the dawn they would have men all over the mountains. Sir Ulyett must leave everything to him—and Herr Stein.

Ulyett looked at Stein as a sharp employer looks at a man asking for a job. "You

know these mountains here?"

"Yes, I know them very well," Stein smiled. "But what I do not know, it is where your friend is lost. Let us ask the Mr. Trove. Pardon." He went out into the hall.

Trove was still there. He was telling his story all over again to a sunburnt man of his own age. It ended in exclamations. "Good God, Adrian, how ghastly for you! Poor old Butler! But I say——"

"Pardon." Stein came forward. "Mr. Trove, please. There is a map in the office. Could you show me where the stones

tell ? "

Trove looked blank. "I don't know. I told them at Mürren. We got up to the place again. At least I think it was the place. But we couldn't find anything. I feel an awful fool. You see, I wasn't taking any notice with Butler. He led and I followed. I'm no good at this mountain business."

"Oh, I say, old chap!" the other man protested. "Pretty good work to get down

again by yourself."

"But come," Stein was soothing, "let us look at the map, Mr. Trove. I can help you

perhaps.'

A large-scale map of the district hung on the office wall. "See, there is Mürren and here Kandersteg. Now." Trove pored over it and Mr. Fortune watched his blank face and Stein demonstrated. "You come up here, yes? Then it is down again. On past some châlets. A stream in a gorge and rocks all twisted. And after—you would be near a glacier—then up over pasture—it becomes very steep—it is all stones. Then you see the great white mountain—beautiful view, wunderschön! Then—"

"Wait. Wait. It was above the scree. It was somewhere there. A sort of narrow passage in the rock. And a shower of stones came down. About there." Trove put his finger on the map. "I'm sure I found it again this morning. But he wasn't there,

you know, he wasn't there!"

"He is somewhere," said Stein. "We will be up there by the couloir at dawn tomorrow." He turned away to the landlord and talked brisk German.

Reggie came to Trove. "Now, my dear fellow, what about that head of yours?"

"Oh, drat it, I'm all right," Trove growled. "Don't fuss me, for Heaven's sake."He thrust his way out.

The other man looked at Reggie. "Are

you a doctor, sir?"

"Eh, lad, he's Mr. Fortune," Ulyett said.

"What, the Mr. Fortune? I say!" He looked puzzled. "But, anyway—Adrian ought to have a doctor."

"Yes, I think so," Mr. Fortune mur-

 $\mathbf{mured}.$

"I say, I'll see what I can do with him. Poor old Adrian, this has rather knocked him over." He hurried away.

Stein made an end of his conference with the landlord and came marching out. Mr. Fortune fell into step. "And what about it?" he said softly.

"I do not understand, my friend."

"The place on the map?"

"The place—that is all right. The simple Mr. Trove, who cannot be sure, he points out the very place where it might have happened as he says, the only place almost. That couloir, often there is a fall of stones there and even a good mountaineer might be caught. Yes, that is all right. But the rest—" He shrugged. "It is most curious. I go to talk to the guides here."

Mr. Fortune sat in the lounge waiting for dinner when the girl came downstairs alone. She looked at him, hesitated, took the chair beside him. "You haven't seen Adrian?"

"No. No. The patient don't want to

be a patient."

"He will come down to dinner. Father wanted him to go to bed. But David says there isn't much the matter really."

"David-that's Trove's friend ?"

"Mr. Woodham, yes; well, he's really a friend of ours—of father's."

"I see. Have you been here long, Miss

Ulvett?"

"Father and I, yes, a fortnight. And Mr. Woodham. Adrian only came the other day with Dr. Butler. That makes it more dreadful. Father and he were old friends and they were going to have a holiday together, and father didn't even see him. Father was away when Dr. Butler came; he'd had to go over to Zürich. Oh, if he'd only been here it wouldn't have happened. Dr. Butler was very keen on climbing, you know. He said he'd snatch a day or two on the mountains and he took Adrian, And then—this!"

"I see. Yes. You don't climb, Miss

Ulvett?"

"I? Oh no. I just walked a little way up the valley with them when they started. I—" Tears came into her eyes. "Just seeing them off, you know." She hid her face. "I'm sorry. Then we came back." "We?"

"Mr. Woodham and I. He wanted to go with them. But he had to go down to Brigue to see somebody. He only came back to-day—just before father. The thunder of a Swiss dinner-gong overwhelmed her.

"Oh, it's horrid waiting, Mr. Fortune." She clasped her hands, struggled for a moment with emotions and left him.

He became aware of the presence of Stein at his elbow. "I wonder," he said to the lifted eyebrows, and they went to dinner.

A moment after Ruth Ulyett came in with her father, and after them Woodham and Trove; much stared at and uncomfortably conscious of it. Trove had made away with the bandage, but a patch of plaster hid one temple. Again Stein's eyebrows asked Mr. Fortune a question. "Oh, my dear chap, how do I know?" he protested.

Stein nodded. His hand swept the whole affair away. And the comfortable dinner

lasted long.

Trove came to their table. "When do we start?" he muttered.

Two placid faces looked up at him. "The guides will start at one," Stein said. is not necessary for you, Mr. Trove."

The two finished their dinner at leisure. When they sat at coffee in the garden, Ulyett loomed up through the dark. "Making an early start, sir? That's good. This is on me, you understand. Don't you think twice about spending. Do you want any money now ? "

"I thank you." Stein waved him away. "I spend no money. The guides—the landlord will tell you, Sir Ulyett." He stood up. "Pardon, I go to sleep. We start early, yes. Your friend calls to us." marched Reggie back to the hotel with a pompous gait. He puffed indignantly on "Ach, my dear Fortune, that the stairs. —that is why we do not always like Englishmen."

"Not a very nice man, no," said Reggie "You get 'em everywhere." He opened the door of his room. "Well-without prejudice-what about it?"

Stein spread himself in a big chair and undid his waistcoat. "My friend, I do not understand. It is possible all happened as Mr. Trove says and we trouble ourselves for nothing. Yes, it is possible. But I do not think so."

"For any particular reason?"

"No, for many particular reasons. you ask, will I make a theory how it happened, I cannot, I have not begun to try. I am not sure in my mind that it happened at all. When we search to-morrow, I am ready to find that this Doctor Butler he is not by the couloir, he is not on the mountain at all. Perhaps he desired to vanish from Sir Ulvett-from the world-and he is gone quite safe."

"It could be," said Mr. Fortune slowly.

"You do not believe it? But we have had cases like that: deaths upon the mountain which were not deaths at all. We could prove nothing, but we knew. I do not believe it of this Doctor Butler yet. But I believe nothing. What is most hard to believe is what Mr. Trove says. Either he tells us not all the truth, or he is an imbecile,"

"Behaviour not normal, no."

"My friend! He is knocked down, as he says, by stones; he is stunned, he is wounded on the head. But he will not show the wound to a doctor. His friend is swept away by the stones. He does not come down to the place where he is staying, where his other friends are; he goes back where nobody knows him. He sends men to search from there. He gives it up quick and goes back again to come round by train. So it is thirty-six hours after his friend is lost before his other friends can know of it. he does not telephone; oh no. That is most wonderful. He gets down to Mürren, having lost Dr. Butler. But he sends no message to the friends at Kandersteg. searches, he finds nothing, he goes back to Mürren and still he does not telephone. thinks Butler may have come here, but he will not ask by telephone; no, he must drag round by train to see. Ach, he may be an honest man, the Mr. Trove, but if he is, he is an idiot."

"There's an answer to all that, you know," said Reggie wearily.

"Then I shall be glad to hear it." was annoyed.

"Well, you're using the professional fal-

I beg your pardon?" said Stein.

"My dear fellow, I'm a policeman myself. We find a man caught in very abnormal circumstances, and if he don't act normally we suspect him. It's the custom of the trade: but delusive. The one thing certain about Trove is, he's had a shock. People suffering from shock won't be reasonable. He says he's lost an old friend in a queer accident which nearly killed him too. Well, that ought to upset a fellow. Quite natural he should just drive on, blundering, fumbling, groping blind after his friend. Quite human."

"So. You acquit the Mr. Trove?"

"My dear fellow, what's the charge?" Reggie smiled.

"God in heaven! Do I know?"

"It might be murder, but we haven't got a body. It might be manslaughter. Still you'd want a body. It might be assistin' an escape from justice. But we don't

know Butler was running away."

Stein laughed. "In effect we know nothing. I confess to you, I thought perhaps the Mr. Trove was lying when he said he searched from Mürren. But it is true. I do not despise the telephone myself. I have talked to Mürren to-night. Some guides went with him and searched up all to the couloir that side. Nothing! They think either Trove took them to the wrong place or Butler did not fall. That also is very possible. Almost anything is possible." He put his head on one side and looked at Reggie. "But I see no reason for anything."

"No. We haven't got to the reasons yet.

Why did they all come here, Stein?"
"Ach, my friend!" Stein laughed.

"What do I know? Why do the English

come to Switzerland?"

"My wife says I came to eat ices," said Reggie sadly. "Butler came to spend a holiday with his old friend Ulyett. But when he got to Kandersteg his old friend Ulyett had gone off for a day or two. That's why Butler went on the mountains."

"So. Let me understand, my friend. You think Sir Ulyett planned for them to

go this expedition?"

"No. Oh no. I don't think anything. But his daughter says he'd run off to Zürich, so Butler, being keen on mountains, took Trove climbing."

"To Zürich? That is a very good alibi." Stein pulled his moustache. "I shall test

it."

"Yes. Woodham's got an alibi too. He went to Brigue. Just after he'd seen Butler and Trove off. Neither Ulyett nor Woodham was here while the thing was happening. They only came back to-day." Mr. Fortune smiled. "Lots of facts, aren't there?"

Stein groaned. "Facts? What is a fact? I have not found one that I believe in." He stood up. "Ach, let us sleep."

Mr. Fortune is aware of his limitations. He did not feel that he would be any use to a party of guides searching mountains. When Herr Stein tramped along the corridor at 1 a.m. he turned over and went to sleep again. His conscience was satisfied with him when he was drinking coffee at six. Upon a melancholy mule which a frowsy boy exhorted he climbed slowly towards the glittering snows of the Blumlisalp. Some hours of solemn progress brought them to a little dark lake laughing in the sunshine. A fir-wood came down to its pleasant beaches on one side; from the other the mountains rose in bare slopes and cliff.

The boy disposed of his mule and strode into the wood and Reggie followed delicately. Walking is a pursuit which he considers obsolete. The path having got out of the wood went up steep hot pastures. The frowsy boy took it in a swinging stride, and Reggie's internal organs heaved and he

melted.

He laboured on up endless slopes of rich grass enamelled with gentians and violas and anemones. He passed a cluster of châlets, he drank milk from the hands of a horrible cool girl who pitied him intolerably, he toiled on over stony ground in which the stars of edelweiss were thick-set, and was again in rich pasture.

Then he began to see men like flies on the slopes above and heard faint calls. The boy turned. "Der Herr is found," he

announced.

Reggie sat down. "You go on," he said. "Tell Herr Stein I'm here." He stretched himself out on the grass, arms and legs wide.

Stein came in long strides. "I have found him, Fortune. He is dead. Come and see."

Reggie arose and climbed after him. A little party of men stood together bareheaded, looking up at the crags above, talking softly. Aloof from them Trove sat with his face hidden. It was a steep slope, on which the grass grew rich but scattered with many stones.

Reggie knelt by the dead man. He lay upon his face, almost hidden in the long grass, and about him was the vanilla scent of the red-brown mountain flower they call Faith-of-men.

Reggie turned the body over. The clothes bore dark stains of blood, there was blood dried upon the face and hair. His slow, careful hands moved here and there. He bent close. . . .

Trove got on his feet and came to see what was being done and saw the dead man's face. "Oh, my God!" he cried. "Why do you keep him lying here? You can't do anything. You can't do anything, can you, Fortune?"

"I'm sorry," said Reggie, and rose and nodded to Stein. He spoke to the guides and the body was gathered up and borne away. Trove stood watching a moment, then hurried after, went ahead and plunged on down.

"So. He is in a hurry," said Stein.

"Perhaps he wants to tell Ulyett," Reggie suggested. "Or perhaps he wants to catch a train."

Stein stared at him. "You think——? Ach, no. But do not fear. I have men at Kandersteg by now."

"I dare say you're right," Reggie murmured, and began to wander about the

mountainside.

"You wonder how it happened?" Stein said. "Come to the couloir." They climbed to that corridor in the ridge of rock and the other slope of the mountains opened before them. "See, there has been a new fall of stones. Here was more than enough to kill men, to sweep them away. Some of the stones have come to this side, some that. If Trove lay here, if he was swept down towards Mürren, he would not see Butler. It is quite natural he should think Butler was carried down on the Mürren side. Also it is natural Butler should have been swept to the other."

"Yes. Yes. But Trove's search party ought to have looked both sides, oughtn't

they?"

Stein shrugged. "He told them it happened on the Mürren side. When they could not find anything there, he was in a hurry to go back. They said so. Then he is a fool, yes. I always said that. But if he is a fool, it is all very possible, more possible as I thought."

Reggie turned back and, slowly wandering here and there, made a devious way down. "See. Here are new stones also." Stein rolled them over. "The grass is quite fresh beneath. Yes, it is all like a most natural accident." Still Reggie gazed at him and he burst out laughing. "Pardon, my dear friend. It is that you look so wondering, so sad. Like a child that is disappointed of something nice, with your round face so innocent."

"Yes. Yes. I have a sweet face," said Reggie. "Rolled rather a long way, didn't he?"

"You think something else?"

"Well, I was thinking it was quite a nice good accident. But they had no luck."

"How do you mean that?"

"All quite simple and accidental—and then Trove goes and has tea with Herr Stein. Well, let's get on." He started down the slope, and Herr Stein, accommodating his trained stride to Reggie's careful little steps, gave a lecture upon falls of stones, their habits and effects. "Yes. Very lucid and interesting. And what happens next?"

Stein shrugged. "Mr. Trove's story goes on the records. I write a report how I found the body. There is no more to do."

"And they all live happily ever after,"

Reggie smiled.

"You are not fair with me, my friend. You are not frank. There is something in

your mind you do not say."

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow! I told you. I said they had bad luck. But Trove bumping into us wasn't the first bit of bad luck. The trouble began when the falling stones didn't kill poor Butler."

"Righteous God! But the man was

dead, he had been long dead."

"Oh yes, a day or two. I think he died soon after the stones fell. Those wounds were made while he was still alive, probably by falling stones. But the wounds weren't enough to kill him."

"So. So. What then? He died lying out on the mountain at night." Stein shud-

dered dramatically.

"Yes. Exposure. It could be. But why did he lie exposed? Why didn't he get on his legs again and come down, same like Trove? No just cause or impediment. No bones broken. No bad wound."

"What do you mean, then? What killed

him?"

"I wonder. Do you have a medical examination in Switzerland when a man is found dead on the mountains?"

"But of course. If there is any doubt."

"Well, I think you'd better doubt, Stein.

But you needn't say so."

"So. That is to tell me you suspect foul play: and by this man Trove. Ach, I remember, you hinted at that before. My dear Fortune, if you would only speak out."

Reggie smiled. "Well, speakin' broadly, I suspect them all. Trove, Ulyett, Wood-

ham, person or persons unknown."

Stein rumbled and muttered. Stein had

trouble in keeping his pace down to Reggie's dainty, careful gait, and at last, "You forgive me, my friend? You are a little slow. I do better to go on. I send someone up from the inn." He swung into his stride.

Reggie went the slower without him, and when the mule-boy climbed up was found sitting above the lake contemplating nature with dreamy eyes. Thereafter he was led down, he was set upon the mule, and that

animal exhorted to a jolting speed.

Stein had a doctor waiting for him with the body, a bearded, bustling doctor, who was honoured to assist Mr. Fortune. He had heard, of course, the story of the accident —how the body was found—these disasters were very sad-in such cases, though, the injuries were not grave, shock and exposure often caused death.

"Yes. We could certify death from exposure, couldn't we?" said Reggie. They moved to the body together.

"All points The doctor worked upon it.

to that, Mr. Fortune."

Reggie opened the dead man's mouth. . . . It was long after when they made an end. "You're satisfied, doctor?" Reggie smiled.

The doctor wiped his face. "There is no doubt, Mr. Fortune. There is no doubt. But it is inhuman."

"Not a nice case, no. That's why everyone had better think it's quite normal. Except Stein. Good-bye. I'll go and tell him.'

He found Herr Stein drinking beer in the hotel garden. "How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour!" he said sadly and went in.

Stein followed him to his room. now, my friend?"

Reggie shook a solemn head.

"Still, you will not believe it was a natural accident?"

"No, not natural. Not accidental. Not originally. The accidents intervened when Butler wasn't killed: that had to be put right. When Trove tumbled into you and me: that couldn't."

"I do not understand," Stein said. "But come, what did you make of the body? What was the cause of death? Are you

sure now?"

"Oh' yes. Butler died of asphyxia. was smothered by some woollen fabric pressed over his mouth while he lay unconscious."

"Is it possible!" Stein cried.

"Oh yes. Yes. Both lungs much congested and one side of the heart. Fragments of wool in the mouth and nostrils. He made no resistance. The tongue is only a little bruised. Medical evidence quite clear. You see what happened. Somebody arranged a fall of stones to kill him. It only knocked him out. So somebody rolled him away down the slope and smothered him. Probably with a tweed coat." He stood up. "Well, we'd better get on, Stein. Mustn't be late for dinner." He began to shed clothes fast. "I say, my lad," his face came out of the tail of his shirt as Stein withdrew, "I've booked the bath."
"So? So!" said Herr Stein, expressing

the emotions of the human reason at the

incomprehensible.

When Reggie came down he saw Stein in a corner with a glass of watered port and Sir Samuel Ulyett and avoided that distressing mixture. Stein was a little late for din-"Pardon," he smiled. "Will you guess what he said to me?"

"Oh, he was asking how you found the

late Butler."

"And more, my friend. He asked me if the doctors were satisfied. That is very interesting. A death on the mountains like that—there is not one in a thousand where the doctors have anything to say."

"No. I've sometimes wondered about that. If I hadn't blown into this mess you'd have called it another mountain accident and buried him all cosy. I wonder how many of the others are this kind."

Stein shrugged. "What can one do? There is never any suspicion."

"No. No. These people could have banked on being safe. I'm afraid we're rather a nuisance, Stein."

"I think so, yes. Look, this Sir Ulyett, why should he think it anything but the ordinary accident? And he comes to ask me if I find foul play!"

"Yes. Quite interesting. Have

looked into his alibi?"

"Have no fear. I look into all their alibis. First, Sir Ulyett. It is true he travelled to Zürich the day before Butler came —that is strange; he departs to be absent when his old friend comes—but he went. He told the landlord he must go to a chemical factory on business—he makes chemicals himself, you remember. And he did go. The next time he is seen, he is back at Kandersteg station the afternoon that Trove was having tea with us. So when the stones fell Sir Ulyett was in Zürich. Second, Mr. Woodham. It is true, he went to Brigue on the day Butler and Trove started. He told the landlord he had to see a friend passing through from Italy. He slept at Brigue that night and the next night. He came back to Kandersteg a little after Sir Ulyett. Those are very good alibis," Stein shrugged.

"But a man may have his alibi and yet know too much. Pst! They watch us from their table. Let us talk of it no more. They try to listen. Let us be gay." He began to tell Mr. Fortune all about London.

He had been there once.

The gaiety of this conversation did not diminish the anxieties of the other table. They were a glum company. Trove said nothing at all and looked misery. Ulvett and Woodham talked in broken bits, with effort and queer glances of uneasy understanding. The girl and Trove went out and left them still at table.

Reggie watched them dreamily, but they were not encouraged to come and talk. "Well, well." He rose. "Let's try the gar-

den, Stein."

But a little man rose out of the office and intercepted Herr Stein. Reggie sauntered on, sat in a remote corner and lit a cigar, and the voice of Trove came to him husky and excited. "I say, Fortune. Could I speak to you?"

"I'm listening."

"I wanted to ask you. Do you think he suffered much?"

Reggie lay back and looked about him. There was a glimmer of a woman's dress in the gloom. "Did you?" he asked.

"No. Oh no. Not till I came to. I mean, was it all over in a minute for him, like that?"

"I wasn't there, you know," said

Trove swallowed. "I mean, you can tell how quickly he died, can't you?"

"I'm only a surgeon. Not God."

Trove retired into the dark, and as he went Stein came. "We take our coffee here, yes?" He sat down. "I hope I do not interrupt."

"I'd finished. I don't know if he had. He wanted to know how Butler died."

"He also! My friend, they are very much afraid."

"Yes. What have you done with Ulyett?"

"He confers with the landlord." Stein began to hum the Preislied for the benefit of a waitress bringing their coffee. When she was gone he went on in a low voice: "Will you guess what he has done? So soon as he heard that we had found Butler dead he went to Butler's room. He takes away to his own room a leather case. Then he goes off quick to the post office and sends a What do you say to that, my telegram. friend?"

"Sounds all right."

"You think so, yes. The old friend takes charge of the dead man's papers and telegraphs to the family their sad bereavement. That is all right. That is most correct. But the telegram was not to the family. It was to a stockbroker."

He gave Reggie a slip of paper.

The telegram was instructions to a broker to stop selling rubber shares and buy.

"And now Sir Ulyett shall explain to me why when his friend is dead he seizes his friend's papers and goes from them quick to change his game on the Stock Exchange."

"Yes. Yes. Very interestin' question.

What's the theory?"

Stein sat up and laid a finger on his arm. But Reggie went on dreamily. "You mean Butler knew something Ulyett wanted? Yes."

"Pst," Stein warned him.

But Reggie did not notice. "Yes. Ulyett had Butler killed in order to get hold of his papers. Yes. You could work on that."

"Ach, righteous God!" Stein muttered. "By all means." Reggie gazed at him. "But why?"

Stein waved empty hands. "Have you no ears, then?" he said. "No senses?"

"Oh, I hope so. I think so."

"I made signs to you. And still you talk! Pardon, my dear Fortune, but it is unfortunate. Ulyett was coming this way. Now he is gone. See."

Sir Samuel was seen to arrive where the others of his party sat by the hotel door. Something was said between him and them. They all went in. "Seems rattled," said

Reggie.

"Is it not strange?" Stein laughed angrily. "The man was coming to us-and you let him hear you say he killed Butler. frightened, yes. Also he is warned."

"Sorry to annoy you," said Reggie.

"But did you not hear him come? Did you not see I tried to stop you?"

"Oh yes. Yes. But I've been in a few cases myself, Stein. I thought you were

wrong."

"So. You are very ingenious," Stein shrugged. "Me; I do not like it. I do not tell the suspect what he is to fear. is for him to make the mistakes, not me. But now Sir Ulyett is on guard. It will not do. You have spoilt my affair."

"Oh, I'm sorry about that," Reggie said placidly. "My dear chap, we don't want more evidence. We want to get rid of what we've got. The existin' theory is that Ulyett murdered Butler to steal his papers. But your evidence is that while Butler was murdered, Ulyett was in Zürich. That's rather a difficulty."

"Pfui! I do not know everything, no. If the alibi is right, Ulyett did not do the murder with his own hands. And what then? Do you forget the Mr. Trove?"

"No. Several curious points about Mr. Trove. Well, well. I wonder what they're

up to now."

"I can guess what Ulyett is doing," said Stein gloomily. "He is burning Butler's papers."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "Well, let's come and see if there's any ashes."

Herr Stein growled and followed.

By the door of the hotel Woodham sat alone. Reggie remarked on the beauty of the night and said he was just going to bed. Woodham was thinking of it. The others had gone some time ago.

"You see!" Stein muttered as they went upstairs. He hurried to Ulyett's door and knocked. There was no answer. He tried

the handle and found the door fast.

He knocked again more loudly and still there was no answer. They waited and listened. Inside the room someone was coughing faintly: stopped: coughed again.

"Oh, my aunt!" said Reggie and ran into the next room. From the window there he clambered to Ulyett's balcony. Ulyett lay on his bed, half dressed, unaware of his visitor; he breathed as if he had a cold, his face was dark. Reggie felt at his brow and his pulse. The arm fell limp as it was let go. He coughed.

Reggie left him and unbolted the door, to find Stein defending himself from a girl in a dressing-gown who wanted to know why he was disturbing her father. Reggie beckoned them in and shut the door behind them. She ran to the bed. "Your father has had an overdose of a sleeping draught, Miss Ulvett."

"It's absurd. It's impossible. He never

takes such things."

"So? So!" said Stein, and contem-

plated the unconscious man.

She shook him, she cried to him, "Father! Father!" but he lay still, and there came from him only that faint, choking cough. "Oh, Mr. Fortune—"

"Yes. Be quite quiet, please. What's

the doctor's telephone number, Stein? Thanks. I don't want anybody in here." Reggie ran out. When he came back he had a steaming jug and a coffee-pot. "Now, Miss Ulyett, everything's goin' to be done for him. You'll go back to your own room, please, and say nothing to anybody."

"Oh, but you'll tell me if——"
"I'll tell you when I know." He put her

out. "Now, Stein, give me a hand." took off his coat.

"What is it? What is to do, Fortune?"
"Veronal, I think. Hefty dose. Now
They worked upon the senseless

The doctor appeared with a bag, panting, flushed, excited. "I come so quick as I can. You make work, Mr. Fortune. What is this, then? Another accident?"

"We'll try strychnine, please," said Reggie stolidly, and the injection was made. . . .

The doctor studied the unconscious body. "It was veronal. How? A suicide?"

"I don't know."

"It is possible, it is very possible," Stein said. He looked at Reggie. "If he was afraid—then——"

"A little digitalin wouldn't do his heart any harm," said Reggie, and again the syringe was used. . . .

"Righteous God!" Stein muttered. "Fortune! Did you think this would happen when he heard——?"

"No. I thought something might hap-

"You meant this?"

"I didn't know," Reggie said slowly, and felt Ulyett's pulse. "I don't know now, Stein. . . ."

It was towards morning when he left the bedside. Though Stein shut the door quietly, somebody heard. The girl sped out of her room, a fluttering ghost in the gloom of the corridor. "Mr. Fortune? You've left him in there alone?"

"Oh, no. No. The doctor's with him. We won't risk anything, Miss Ulyett. But he's doing quite well. He has a good heart. Doesn't use drugs much in the ordinary way, does he?"

"Of course he doesn't. It's ghastly. I

can't believe he took anything.'

"Something happened to him," said Reggie quietly. "What do you think it was?"

She flung back her head and he saw her

throat throbbing.

"Everything's like a horrible dream," she cried. "Poor Dr. Butler, and now father. Mr. Fortune! I believe it was Dr. Butler's

death made father like this." Large, dark eyes gazed at him in a miserable appeal. "The shock, you know? Couldn't it be?"

"Your father was all right at dinner."

"Oh no, Mr. Fortune. He was wretched. He wasn't a bit like himself. And afterwards, when he came in from the garden, we thought he was going to faint. They had to get him some brandy."

"Did they, though?" Reggie murmured.

"Who thought of that?"

"I don't know." She pushed back her hair. "Adrian brought it, I think. What does it matter? He was frightfully upset. He drank it and said he was all right. But I had to help him upstairs to bed. I'm sure it was just shock, Mr. Fortune."

Outside in the corridor Stein waited. "So? The daughter has something to

say?"

"Yes. She says he came back from the

garden sufferin' from shock."

"So," said Stein with satisfaction. "That was surprising, my friend."

"And Trove brought him a drink."

"So?" Stein smiled. "Always the Mr. Trove."

"That's surprising too, isn't it?" Reggie was a little shrill. "Good night."

When Stein came down in the morning, he was told that Mr. Fortune had eaten his breakfast. He found Mr. Fortune sitting on the small of his back contemplating the mountains from behind a large cigar. "And

how is it now, my friend?"

"'Twas the voice of the sluggard, I heard him complain," Reggie murmured: his round face was pale and languid. "Thank you, we are doing as well as can be expected. Taken quite a lot of nourishment. But still prostrate. Lucky beggar. Doctor's gone. Grenadier of a nurse in charge." He lowered his voice. "Have you got a nice, quiet man about? Sort of fellow that can follow a fellow and not show up. Good. Tell him to look after me. I'm thinkin' of takin' a little walk."

"So. You fear something more?"

"Oh, Lord, yes. We aren't done yet."

"So. You shall be guarded, my friend. But I beg of you, no more like last night. That was too rash."

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!"
Reggie sighed, "It didn't do any dam'
thing. Run away." He saw Trove and
Woodham at the door of the hotel. They
watched him hungrily and as Stein faded
away approached him.

"This is a bad business about Ulyett, sir," Woodham began. "I hear you were up all night."

"No. No. Lost my beauty sleep, that's

all."

"What is it?" Trove blurted out. What's the matter with him?"

"Well, Miss Ulyett thinks it's shock." Reggie considered him dreamily. "You wouldn't wonder, would you?"

"Good Lord, no," said Woodham. "Poor old Ulyett! I'm afraid Butler's death hit

him rather hard."

"Yes, a bad business. I wonder." He stood up and stretched himself. "I was just going for a walk. If you two fellows have got time, there's one or two little things I'd like to ask you."

"Rather," said Woodham heartily.
"Come on." Trove made no objection.

The road was populous in the village. Reggie turned off into a path across half-mown pasture and, coming between them, urged them to analyse the separate scents of hay in the making. Woodham, with a certain condescension, assisted. Trove made noises and at last exploded. "You wanted to ask us something, didn't you?"

"Well, it is rather a complex case." Reggie stopped. A man who was trudging after them went into a shed. They were close to the base of the mountain wall which shut in the valley. Reggie turned away towards the gorge by which in roaring falls the river came down. "Of course you fellows know much more about it than I do," he murmured.

Trove gave him a fierce, puzzled stare. Woodham laughed. "I say! That's rather startling. I'm afraid I don't know anything that I know of."

"Oh yes. Yes. I was thinking about these two men. What exactly is the connexion between Butler and Ulyett?"

Trove looked at Woodham. "Why, they were very old friends," Woodham said.

'Surely you knew that."

"Yes. So I've heard. And Ulyett makes chemicals, and Butler's a consulting chemist. Any business connexion?"

"Hadn't you better ask Ulyett?" said

Woodham coldly.

"I hope to. But Ulyett's unfortunately out of action. Rather curious conjunction. One old friend comes to see another. And one gets killed before they meet and the other is knocked out. Any business reasons?"

"I'm afraid I can't help you," said Wood-

ham. "I'm not in their confidence, Mr. Fortune."

"You were, weren't you?" Reggie

turned to Trove.

"I was Butler's assistant. You know that," Trove said sullenly. "Look here, what is all this, Fortune ? You came into the business as a doctor. You're talking like a policeman."

"Yes," said Reggie and paced on. They were climbing the steep path into the gorge. "I am a policeman. Didn't you

know?"

"I know who you are," Trove growled.

"Steady, Adrian," Woodham said gently. " Not quite playing the game, is it, Mr. Fortune? When a fellow calls in a doctor he doesn't expect to get a detective."

"No. It was a bit of luck."

"So that anything Adrian says can be used as evidence against him. Oh, very lucky—for Adrian." Woodham turned, laughing. "I think Mr. Fortune had better go on walking by himself, old man."

But Trove stood fast. "What the devil do I care?" he cried. "What do you want to know? Ulyett often consulted Butler, I can tell you that. He'd been consulting him about a process for making synthetic rubber, and Butler was going to report to him here."

Reggie walked on slowly and the roar of the falling water rose about them.

was Butler going to say?"

"I don't know."

"Ah, pity." Reggie paused and looked down through the spray at the foam which boiled about the rocks in the gorge. "Whose

process was it?"

Woodham laughed. "I suppose it was mine, eh, Adrian? If you'd asked me what I had to do with Ulyett I would have told you at first, Mr. Fortune. I submitted a process for synthetic rubber to Sir Samuel Ulyett. And what then?"

"Well, that's that," said Reggie. "Now about Butler's death." He turned to Trove. "You started off with him up that way,"

he pointed above the gorge.
"I was with them," Woodham smiled.

"Oh yes. Yes. You and Miss Ulyett saw them off." Reggie drew from his pocketbook a little map on tracing-paper. "Let's get this clear." Holding it by the corner, he gave it to Trove. "You went up the valley and Woodham left you aboutwhere?"

"I don't know. Somewhere there." Reggie took the map by the corner again and passed it to Woodham. "What do you sav?" he smiled.

"About there, yes. An hour's walk. What's the use of this? I came back to the hotel with Miss Ulyett and went off to

Brigue."

"Yes. Yes. Thanks very much." Reggie smiled and took the paper again deli-cately. "I'm afraid it was rather greasy." He put it away with care. "Sorry. I wanted your finger-prints."

Woodham shrugged. "You seem to pre-

fer dirty tricks, Mr. Fortune."

"What do you want my finger-prints for?" Trove cried.

"Would you be surprised to hear there were finger-prints on Butler's clothes?"

"His own, I suppose," said Woodham.

"No, I didn't see his own."

"They might be mine," Trove muttered.

"Yes, they might have been."

"Oh, Heaven! You mean he was murdered?"

"Steady, Adrian," Woodham "You've had enough, old man. Don't say anything now. Better get back. You're not fit for any more of these dirty tricks."

Trove stumbled away. Then Woodham turned upon Reggie. "So you found fingerprints, did you?" he said, and his face was

"Do you mind?" Reggie smiled.

"Wasn't it luck?" Woodham approached. "Wasn't it damned luck you came?"—and sprang at him.

Reggie dropped and caught at his knees. He fell, and went on falling down into the gorge, bounded from rock to rock into the

rushing foam.

Reggie rose from the ground to meet the rush of a sturdy Swiss who chattered German at him. "Lord God, you are safe, you are not hurt? The villain, the murderer. I saw all. He would have killed you."

"Oh yes. Yes. That was the idea,"

Reggie smiled.

"He is gone! He is gone!" The detective peered down into the foam.

"Yes. You'd better look for him."

The detective gasped. "As the gentleman says," he muttered and stared at the placid gentleman with goggling eyes.

Reggie wandered back to the hotel lan-

guidly.

He was received by Herr Stein with every sign of excitement. "My friend, there is news. The guides they find marks that a man has been up above the couloir where the stones start from."



Some time after lunch Mr. Fortune came out of Ulvett's room and went to his own, then rang for a waiter and asked him to find Mr. Trove and Herr Stein. Trove came quickly. "Well, what now?

going to give me in charge?"
Reggie held out his hand. "My dear chap !" he said. But Trove did not take "Oh, my dear chap! That little game wasn't meant for you. I had to make sure

of Woodham."

"What have you done with Woodham?" Trove cried.

"When Woodham knew I knew, he tried for me too. But I was ready, you see. He went down into the gorge."

Stein came in. "So!" He looked at the pair of them.

"Now we hear all about it, yes?"

"Oh, quite clear, isn't it?" Reggie murmured. He dropped into a chair. "Woodham invented a process for making rubber and took it to Ulyett. Possible sort of process. I fancy the original idea was that he could force the pace and marry Miss Ulyett before it was tried out. The lady didn't oblige. Ulyett sent the process to Butler for investigation and report. But he was rather taken by it and he began a little gamble in rubber shares and took Woodham Quite a nice bit of business. Synthetic rubber coming-slump in the market. Only Butler decided the process was no good."

"He never told me that," said Trove.
"It was in his papers. Woodham may have guessed. Probably he always knew it wouldn't stand examination. He stuck to Miss Ulyett, but he couldn't make anything of her, and Butler was due. Something had to be done about it. He got Ulyett to go and talk to the Zürich chemical works about subsidiary work for his precious process and so had Butler to himself for a night. I take it he made sure Butler was going to turn him down. Further action was necessary. When Butler took you off over the mountains he saw his chance. He went off to Brigue and put up his alibi. That was his only weak point. That made me take notice of Mr. Woodham."

"So?" Stein said.

"Quite a nice alibi. But too simple. Brigue's about an hour from Kandersteg. Quite easy to book a room there and be here when you want to. Woodham was up above the couloir waiting for you when you came back. He started the stones on you. And

then the luck began to run against him. If you'd both been killed, he could have got back and abolished Butler's papers and kept Ulyett in play and made something of the rubber gamble. Well, he didn't kill either of you. He found you



"He fell, and went on falling down into the gorge."

both stunned. He rolled Butler away and stifled him."

"My God! That was it, was it?"

"Oh yes. Yes. Stifled him with a coat. Butler didn't suffer. But meanwhile you came to and ran off for help. Second bit of bad luck. Still it looked all right to Woodham. He'd got his alibi. And if there was any talk of foul play you'd be suspected. But then you bumped into us at Interlaken. Third bit of bad luck. That was finally fatal. I'm afraid he didn't realise it till to-day. He rather under-estimated other people. These clever chaps do. Well, I think we played up to Mr. Woodham quite nicely. No nasty questions. Not a word about him. Ulyett made the trouble. When he heard Butler was dead he went for Butler's papers and found out the rubber process was no good. Hence the hasty telegram, Stein. That annoyed Woodham, who wanted to go on with the gamble and use the sham process to frighten the market. Hence a strain in their relations that night, Stein. Poor old Ulyett heard us talking things over in the garden, and instead of butting in and telling us what he knew, which was what I was playing for, he nearly fainted. Unfortunate reaction. Woodham saw him knocked over and didn't know why. Very disconcerting. It seemed the best thing to Woodham to eliminate Ulyett.

Then Ulyett couldn't blab, and if it looked like suicide, it would look as if Ulyett had been up to something dirty. So Woodham went off for brandy, put some veronal in it and gave it to you to take to Ulyett. He very nearly won that game too. Which made it obvious that something had to be done good and quick to deal with Mr. Woodham. Hence our little altercation this morning."

"But, I say, what about those finger-prints? If you found finger-prints on poor

Butler, why——"

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!" Reggie smiled. "There weren't any fingerprints. That was only a little device to bring Mr. Woodham up to the scratch."
"Good Heaven!" Trove stared at him.

"Yes. Yes. These little things are confusing to the layman. Well, that bein' that, I'll just go back to my wife. Good-bye." And he went.

Trove looked at Stein and Stein looked at Trove. "So!" said Stein. "So. You see now, my friend. It is quite simple. But what an artist!"

Mrs. Fortune, strolling under the trees at Interlaken, was surprised by a hand coming under her arm. "My dear child!" she smiled.

"Come on, Joan," said Mr. Fortune. want a hazel ice."

NEXT MONTH—"THE CAT'S MILK."

Mrs. Heath, the great lady of the place, had met with an accident. They had found her lying in the rhododendron pool and she was still unconscious.

"She was walking in the twilight—an old lady—she fell."

But the circumstances were suspicious, and Reggie Fortune was called in. At the family conference tea was brought and with the tea came a grey Persian cat, large-ruffed, majestical. He sat in the middle of the room, surveyed the occupants one by one with narrowing golden eyes and yawned.

"Hullo! Thought the Emperor was with the invalid," Brett smiled.

"So he was," said Valerie. "He's left her for his tea, I suppose." Reggie, a friend of cats, was pained: he bent and tickled the Emperor respectfully. The Emperor walked

a yard away.

Valerie laughed. "Almost human, isn't he, Mr. Fortune?" She poured a saucer of milk and set it down. The Emperor watched her, came to the milk, looked at it and sat down by it. Then he licked his lips, walked to the door and said that he wished to go.

"We don't like strangers, perhaps," Reggie murmured, and opened the door for the

Emperor.

A simple incident but significant. It was a tangled web indeed that Mr. Fortune had to penetrate, but he owed his success to a nimble brain—and after that to "the cat's milk." One of the best stories of this popular series.

CIMPSE E. TEMPLE THUDSTON

HERE are moments for all of us when we see the blaze of truth. In a radiant vision it appears to us, naked and without shame. It is as though, like Moses, we saw the face of God. It is a glimpse. And it is not given to the human eye to look at it for long.

You never know at what moment that glimpse may come, from what quarter or in what guise. It is fleeting. It must be seized or it is gone. It is the instant of revelation, as sudden as it is swift. It takes no account of time or place. In the midst of laughter it may appear, in the solitude of the hillside or in the crowded street. Paul was journeying to Damascus. The man and the girl in this little history were playing in amateur theatricals in a small provincial town. Comparisons can be ridiculous like that. Life itself is ridiculous.

Dr. Welford was the latest addition to the society of Bilbrook. He was old Dr. Dowling's new assistant. Partnership was in prospect. He had an excellent manner. He was cheerful. Within a few weeks after his arrival, there were not a few who realised that when old Dr. Dowling died—and he would probably kill himself as he did some of his patients—the practice would automatically pass into Welford's hands. His future was in Bilbrook.

Undoubtedly he realised that. With a

certain inconsequent charm he submitted to the process of becoming a popular young man. There was no particular strength of character about him. Just this charm. He turned up at dinner parties badly dressed, with untidy collars and shirts that were frayed at the cuffs. But it offended no one. Mothers of families in the neighbourhood said he wanted looking after.

"He's little more than a medical student,"

they said. "Nice boy."

Mrs. Dowling took him about with her in the beginning. She mothered him. It was part of the business, part of the practice. As the new assistant, he had to be introduced. To be shown about. She gave him little hints about his clothes. She would straighten his tie before they went out together to pay a call.

"You don't realise the importance of

appearances," she said.

She was a far-seeing woman with an elderly husband. The future of the practice was a matter of importance to her. She took him to houses where there were nice girls.

He was very bad at tennis. But he was asked to tennis parties. All the nice girls played with him. They laughed at his inefficiency and he laughed. Most of them played with striking ability and wore silk bandeaus round their heads. Some played so well that they wore eye-shades. They all

served overhand, and often he missed their service altogether. But they laughed. he laughed.

At the ladies' bridge parties that were part of the essential society of Bilbrook, Mrs. Dowling discussed his future between the deals. Sometimes when she was dummy.

"I hope he won't marry for money," she said to friends of hers who possessed it. "He's far too nice to just sell himself away."

He was not her son. She could say what she liked. No one could accuse her of selfinterested match-making. And it was little things like that that made the wealthy people in the neighbourhood think what an eligible and estimable young man he was. chances were excellent. For though he could not play tennis, and revoked continually at bridge—for which his partners always forgave him, he was so nice about it—he was not without accomplishment.

He could sing. It was a throaty voice, annoyingly inaudible at times. But there was a tenderness in it and a hint of passion, somewhat stifled in the larynx, but perceptible enough to bring an unexpected silence amongst the young ladies who served overhand on the tennis-court.

When he sang "Summertime on Bredon" a little thrill used to pass through the veins of his younger female listeners as he executed the line—"Oh, noisy bells, be dumb!"

It was somewhat strangulated and sounded as though it passed through a respirator before it reached his audience, but afterwards there would be a distinct pause before they said—

"Oh-thank you."

Even the older ladies were impressed. Looking up from the bridge table at the other end of the room, though they might be in the middle of a game, they would say—

"That's a nice little thing—what is it?"

And he could paint too in water-colours. When the opportunity for his work allowed, these tennis girls had sometimes found him sitting on a little camp-stool in some unexpected part of the country as they drove by in the family motor-car. They would stop and get out.

"Whatever are you doing here?"

They had gone by that spot so often at thirty and forty miles an hour. They had never thought of anyone sitting there, looking at it. He would narrow his eyes like an artist and say-

"Painting."

Then they would look over his shoulder

and see a floating pool of colour on the piece of paper he was holding on his knees. It didn't look like anything, but he explained he was only roughing it in. He said with emotional enthusiasm-

"Did you ever see anything like the colour of those trees and that hill in the distance!"

And they looked. They knew the trees were green. But what apparently were going to be the trees on his paper were purple. However, artists always saw things like that, and evidently there was something of the artist about him. That was what made him so interesting. Look at the way he sang.

When the winter came round and the Bilbrook Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society began its activities, it became obvious to everyone that Dr. Welford would take some part in it. With his voice and his temperament.

They were playing one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas that year. It was not a startling excursion. They played one every year. And when they had played all through the list, for they were a long-established society, then they started all over The organist rehearsed them for the music. A bank clerk who had been born for the stage but grown up to find himself behind a counter was responsible for the dramatic production. It was the event of the year in Bilbrook.

All the available talent in the town was employed. Mr. Wattage, the bank clerk, though his life was engaged upon more mundane matters, had an eye for the casting of a play. He had long, wavy hair and looked romantic behind the frosted glass that shielded his desk in the bank.

It was he who cast the young doctor for Giuseppe in "The Gondoliers." It was he who selected Eva Northcote, the grocer's

daughter, for the part of Tessa.

There were old inhabitants having seen many performances of the Society who said -as we say in London on the eve of a classic production-"She can never play that part. She hasn't got the voice. Pretty, of course-but-

You can't get away from critics. One half of the world must look on and none are content with it. Criticism is largely the cry of the disappointed.

Rehearsals took place in a large room at the back of the Crown Inn. Mr. Pinch, the auctioncer, held his sales there in the daytime. Small select dances were given in it by Mrs. Dowling, when it was possible to avoid inviting the tradespeople, as was unavoidable at the Town Hall, where the plays of the Society were ultimately rerformed. The Crown was in the High Street. It was convenient for everybody.

Welford, at rehearsals, justified all that was expected of him. In a little love scene that he had to play with the grocer's daughter he revealed all the qualities of

romance.

But how about Miss Northcote herself? Could she ever play the part? Like an entrepreneur in the West End of London, Mr. Wattage went about the town of Bilbrook telling everyone to wait and see.

As he cashed your cheque over the bank

counter, he would say-

"Suppose you've heard Miss Northcote's playing Tessa?"

Forgetting to count your notes, you would

say—
"But she can't sing, can she?" Probably you would refer to the fishmonger's daughter who played the part of Tessa the last time the Society produced "The Gondoliers," and you would add-

"We shall never have a better Tessa than

Miss Dipper."

To all of which, running his fingers through his long hair, Mr. Wattage would reply-

'Well—you wait and see."

Now rehearsals for these amateur performances are not a matter of weeks, as it is in London with the professionals. They run into months. For months, once or twice a week, the young doctor rehearsed his love scene with the grocer's daughter.

"I should like to just go through that again, if you don't mind," he said frequently to Mr. Wattage. But the bank clerk was a martinet in the theatre, that is to say, at

the Crown.

"I can't keep going over things again I've got to get on. You must rehearse by yourselves if you want more time for it."

The result of this was that Welford and Miss Northcote would retire to a secluded passage outside the room and rehearse their scene alone until the exigencies of the play demanded their return.

There is one great difference between amateur and professional theatricals. The professional actor can apparently rehearse and enact the most passionate love scene with the most beautiful actress and remain unmoved by her charms untouched by her personality, unconscious of the subtle depths of her nature. If this were not the case, then the private domestic life of the theatrical profession would be at sixes and sevens. This is unthinkable.

But on the amateur stage all this is entirely different. Kisses, if they have to be given, are seldom applied until the night, and even then, knowing the performers so well in every-day life, the audience giggles. More often than not, after but a single show, a scandal is started in the town, or a match is made as the result of that one embrace.

This is the effect upon the audience. Upon the performers themselves it is more subtle even than that.

As Tessa, the grocer's daughter had to sit on young Welford's knees in the course of their love scene. But in amateur theatricals an intimacy like this is seldom actually achieved until the night of the performance, or at least at the dress rehearsal. Both of them knew, all through those months of rehearsals, there would come the moment when she would be in this close proximity to him. The effect of that knowledge was delicate. That he merely stood beside her in this scene during rehearsal and laid a hand lightly on her shoulder to indicate the intimate moment only served to drive deeper that effect into their minds.

When it came to the instant of kissing -and to suggest the embrace they leant their faces a little closer to each otherthe sense of anticipation was magnetic. It was unavoidable that in these amorous delays of amateur histrionic necessity they should come to know more and more of each The familiarity of the professional which breeds contempt for his job was

unknown to them.

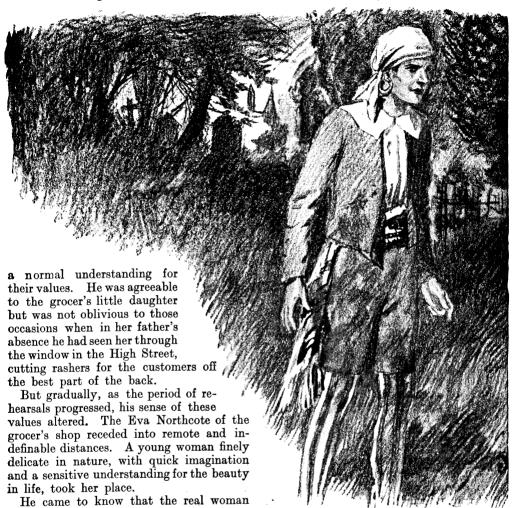
For the first few weeks of rehearsal the young doctor never forgot his professional capacity. These were just amateur theatricals, and this young girl he happened to be playing with was the grocer's daughter. She sat at the desk in her father's shop in the odours of bacon and cheese and dry farinaceous. He was aware of that. He was aware that one day he might himself be filling Dr. Dowling's important position in Bilbrook.

These were the facts of his life which have little or nothing to do with the radiancy of truth. Time and death scatter them all as though they had never existed. Dr. Dowling had once been a young man, efficient at his job. That had been a fact.

truth was there in it now? There were plenty of people in Bilbrook who said he ought to have retired long ago.

Dr. Welford perceived these facts with

to be forgotten. Welford forgot them. The fact that she was the grocer's daughter took its place in his mind in relation to the eternal instability of fact. A thousand



He came to know that the real woman was being revealed to him. No one knew her with the knowledge that gradually was coming to him. He felt that. They both felt it.

In those private little rehearsals that took place in the secluded passage at the Crown, there were moments of pause, particularly when they came to the instant of embrace, when, leaning his face a little nearer to hers and saying, "We kiss here—don't we?" he saw something near to wonder in her face.

But they did not kiss. Now wonder is not a thing that a man can see in a woman's face and ignore. If bacon and cheese and dry farinaceous are a portion of either of their lives, they are liable in that moment tricks of circumstance could alter that. A distant relative might die and leave them a fortune, when Mr. Northcote would be received in the most select of Bilbrook society. Let but his Ford van be changed into a forty-horse-power limousine, and instead of approaching the houses of the élite by the back door, he would be driving up to the front. Let them but eat his cheese without paying for it and the fact of Mr. Northcote having been a grocer would disappear as though it had never existed.

But no trick of circumstance can alter the beauty of mind in a woman's essential nature. This was the revelation that Dr. Welford was gradually approaching through those protracted months of rehearsal for the performance of "The Gondoliers."

in London—the last sight of the grocer's daughter disappeared. Eva Northcote, who could cut a rasher of bacon as thin as any machine, no longer existed. This girl with



"And in that tender, small voice which Mr. Wattage had advised all Bilbrook to wait for, she sang."

It came at length to the dress rehearsal at the Town Hall. In that Venetian frock—hired from a leading theatrical costumier's

faintly tinted cheeks, with warm lips and pencilled eyes, compellingly took her place.

All through that performance, to which

none of the public, not even the Bilbrook representative of the Midshire Express, was admitted, young Welford could see no one but her. The future of his career was not in Dr. Dowling's practice. It was there. In her face. In her voice. In everything which expressed that beauty of mind he had gradually discovered in the grocer's daughter.

"I think we ought to rehearse that embrace properly," said Mr. Wattage, with an eye to the finished performance. "Miss Northcote, will you put your arm round Dr. Welford's neck? Now the kiss. —but I hope you'll do it with a little more —more——" he used the word—gusto— "to-morrow night."

There were members of the chorusthe postman, the bootmaker, the bootmaker's niece and various others—peeping at them from the wings. Welford knew she was nervous, shy, ill-at-ease.

At the unearthly hour of half-past eleven, when all Bilbrook was in bed and the dress rehearsal was over, he walked out of the Town Hall with her into the dark and silent High Street. It was not like a real world. All the shops were shuttered. You would not know whose was the grocer's, whose the butcher's establishment. It was not the town of Bilbrook. It was an enchanted place.

The glamour of that tuneful music was still in their ears. Mr. Fairbrass, the auctioneer's clerk, the only man in Bilbrook with a tenor voice, had just been singing "Take a pair of sparkling eyes." In the melodious silence of that dark street, Welford could have believed he was one of the Bohemians—Rudolfo with his Mimi—free and unfettered by those appearances which made up the narrow, little life of an English country town.

For the first few moments in silence they walked along the street towards Northcote's shop. Most of the other Bohemians vanished. Echoing dispersed \mathbf{and} through the dim-lit streets, they could hear their voices, phantasmal and unreal, fading away in the distance. A group of girls and men passing up the hill out of the town were singing one of the choruses. Fairbrass on the other side of the street, hurrying home to a wife whom he hoped was asleep, was humming his solo. indefatigable Mr. Wattage was giving his last attentions to the stage. A few more moments' delay in their return and they would be alone in the town of Bilbrook.

"Are you in a hurry to get back?" he

"No-not particularly. I expect they're all asleep."

"Shall we walk round through the churchyard and back by the upper road?"

She consented. A silent consent. consent that consisted of a slight turn of her body in the direction he suggested; in a raising of her head, finding his eyes looking at her and letting hers fall again. He needed no more than that. turned round and walked back. Up the slope by the Hall and into the churchvard.

"The worst of these dress rehearsals," he said, "is that you have to go straight through. You can't do your own bit two or three times over."

She knew what he meant. He wanted to rehearse their scene again—then, there, with none of those inquisitive faces peering at them from the wings. She walked beside him in silence, just waiting for him to say it. Already her consent was given. He knew that. He had no fear of her refusal. He only needed to put it into words.

When he did say it, she merely stood still with a sweet obedience, waiting for him to begin.

"But not with that coat on," he said. "You don't look a bit like Tessa."

She took it off. He discarded his. They laid them on a flat table of a tombstone. And there they stood, a Venetian gondolier and his maid in an English churchyard. An owl was screeching in the yew trees. The church clock struck midnight. They played their scene with Gilbertian exactitude, surrounded by the still bodies of the dead, and there was nothing in life they had ever done since they had played games of patience in childhood that had seemed to them so real as that.

"Now you sing your song," he said. And in that tender, small voice which Mr. Wattage had advised all Bilbrook to wait for, she sang. It could not have disturbed the dead. The owl screeched above it in the yew trees. It was necessary to lean nearer to her to hear the words. And he leant nearer.

> "When a merry maiden marries, Sorrow goes and pleasure tarries; All the world becomes a song— All is right and nothing wrong."

He was watching the twist of her red lip, the attractive frown about her brows when she rose to a note that was only just within her reach.

"But how are we going to do this sitting on the knee business?" he asked when she came to the second verse.

She looked at the flat table of the tombstone. He measured the height of it with his eye. Their coats were laid on the stone. It was obvious how they were going to do it. Without further discussion he seated himself there. He put his arm about her and helped her to his knee.

They were sitting there on the grave of a Josiah Benn and Louisa his beloved wife, who departed this life respectively in the years 1896 and 1899, and whose bones were rotting in the earth beneath them. They were sitting there in Venetian costumes, with painted cheeks and lips and eyes, and neither of them was laughing at the ridiculousness of it all.

She was leaning her face against his, as Mr. Wattage had asked her to do. She was singing—

"All the world becomes a song—All is right and nothing wrong."

And then they kissed.

Not so much with—gusto—as Mr. Wattage had demanded of them, but a kiss that held their lips together and would not and could not part them.

It was then for that moment, and for the whole of the twenty-four hours that followed after, that young Welford had his glimpse, his revelation. Those hours were the hours of his journey into Damascus. Then and for that short space of time he saw the face of God.

"We shall be married," he said when their lips parted. "I know I've found the most wonderful woman in the world."

He took her back to Northcote's shop in the High Street. It was not the shutters only that concealed those pyramidal structures of dry farinaceous in gaudy-coloured packets. The boxes of sultanas and currants might have been there in the forefront of the naked window, the cured hams hanging in the shop within, and he would not have seen them. They were the mere facts of life which circumstance could have annihilated with one gesture of chance.

He had found the spirit of life answering to the free spirit in himself; he had discovered, for him, the most wonderful woman in the world; and Northcote's shop that night, in the dark and silent street of Bilbrook, was a mere resting-place for her head, until he could take her and keep her in some place of his own.

For the whole of the next day he passed through the duties of his work as those who walk in a dream. Meeting him in the consulting-room, Mrs. Dowling said she was glad they only had these performances once a year.

"Goodness knows what would become of us," she said, "if they had any more. Life is not all singing and dancing."

The Town Hall was crowded that night. Mr. Pinch, the auctioneer, came straight from his dinner in a dinner-jacket, a black tie and an opera cloak. The leaders of Bilbrook society in the front rows were every one in evening dress. These observances were serviceable in maintaining the necessary distinctions of class. The young ladies who played tennis so well could not have been better dressed if they were sitting in the stalls of a London theatre. It was astonishing to see the amount of wealth there could be in so small a town as that. And all of them were waiting to see the young doctor make his first appearance on the Bilbrook stage.

There was no doubt he was a success. He looked romantic in that costume of the Gondolieri. Production by the organist had not removed the throatiness of his voice, but more than any of them he had the air of being able to sing.

As for Eva Northcote, the grocer's daughter, even Mr. Pinch, hardest critic of all to please in these theatrical excursions, had to admit that she was charming. Her scene with young Welford fascinated Bilbrook had discovered a new soubrette whose Tessa would knock that of the fishmonger's daughter ten years before into a cocked hat. Miss Dipper, once famous, was forgotten. Quite secretly they envied the young doctor when she sat on his knee. Mr. Pinch, who had brought his opera-glasses with him, raised them involuntarily to his eyes as they kissed. He was sitting in the front row only a few feet from them, but he couldn't help himself. Mrs. Lumley, the washerwoman, in one of the back rows, laughed out loud. It was purely emotional. She did not really think it funny at all. Someone in the gallery cheered.

It was left to the ladies of Bilbrook to appreciate the real significance of that performance. They did it unerringly. The young doctor was in love with the grocer's daughter. Oh, of course he was. Anyone could see that. There was no sense in

shutting one's eyes to it. People didn't kiss like that on the stage unless they liked it or had had a professional training. Clever a producer as Mr. Wattage was, he could not make Sam Northcote's daughter sit on anybody's knee with that conviction unless she wanted to.

It was disgraceful.

Mrs. Dowling had compared her impressions with every mother of importance in Bilbrook before she went home that night. They all agreed. The young doctor was in love.

anticipated when she confronted Dr. Welford with her suspicions.

"We're engaged to be married," he said. He said it firmly, but his faith was already in the balance. What had seemed to him that night in the churchyard to be the inspiration of reason, appeared differently now in the light of Mrs. Dowling's common sense. The glimpse was fading. The vision was becoming faint.

After her first horror at what she had heard, she laid the facts before him with a shrewd and unerring hand. They were all



"There was no mistaking that settled look of despair on his face as he watched her cutting the rashers of bacon."

What a state of affairs! Could men possibly make such fools of themselves, just because a girl put some red on her lips and cheeks and pencilled her eyebrows! The whole foundation of their society would become insecure if such a thing were to be admitted. Where was the advantage of their daughters learning to serve overhand and wearing expensive silk bandeaus like Mademoiselle Lenglen if such an anomaly as this could be allowed!

Mrs. Dowling returned home that night and in bed she told her husband all about it. The old doctor snored in his sleep and did not hear her final convictions. But in the morning he agreed with everything she told him she had said.

Yet it was worse than she had even

undeniable. He could not refute any of them. He had to listen.

Did he think Northcote would give up his grocer's shop just because his daughter had married a struggling young doctor? Of course he wouldn't. How would he like entertaining them on Sundays when the shop was closed? Would anyone care to meet as his wife the girl who had cut them rashers from the best part of the back?

With a sinking heart he listened to it all. When she had finished, he offered the only alternative that could preserve his faith.

"We could leave Bilbrook," he said. "I suppose there is a good deal in what you say—but we could leave Bilbrook. I could get a partnership in some other place."

She looked at him in amazement. Could men be such fools about women! Give up the chance of a practice that one day would certainly become his own! Throw these last two years of his work, when he had made himself so popular, to the winds! She couldn't believe her ears. She told him so. With such conviction did she acquaint him with this impediment of her hearing, that he found it difficult to believe it all himself.

Indeed, in this glaring and artificial light of facts, the glimpse was fast falling from him. No longer was she the most wonderful woman in the world, as she had been when they sat on the tombstone of Josiah Benn's grave. There was no denying it. She was the grocer's daughter. He fought with anguish against the realisation of that, but his vision of the essential truth was gone. Only the material facts remained. They were impenetrable. He could not see beyond them.

When Mrs. Dowling asked him if he had completely taken leave of his senses, it seemed quite possible it might be so. Leave Bilbrook, when the whole of his future lay there before him in comfortable security! Had he really ever thought of doing that? Yet he made one last despairing effort.

"But you none of you know her as I know her," he exclaimed. "You haven't seen what I've seen—the real beauty there is in her mind. Being a grocer's daughter doesn't make any difference to her real nature. She's wonderful."

"All right," said Mrs. Dowling. "If you think that, come down the town with me now. I've got to go to Northcote's to order some things. Come and find her without the paint on her cheeks and the black on her eyebrows. If you say she's like that, you won't be afraid to see her as she is. Come along."

Why did he hesitate? Was it because he was really afraid? Enforcing his heart with a desperate courage, he went.

With a wisdom taught of cunning, Mrs. Dowling was sweetness itself to Eva Northcote that morning. But the order she gave was designed to put the grocer's daughter through all her paces. She was to be seen pulling the wire through the Gorgonzola

cheese. No one could fail to observe how well she cut the rashers of bacon from the best part of the back. Only the closest student of human nature, listening to her knowledge of the grocer's business, could have realised the inner beauties of her mind. And when Mr. Northcote came into the shop, Mrs. Dowling held him in engaging conversation about the state of trade and the encroaching dangers of the Co-operative stores.

To all of this young Welford bore silent witness. To all of it Eva Northcote responded with a fateful consciousness of its meaning. Better even than he, she knew the world was against her. Better than he, she realised the mere glimpse it had been.

There was no mistaking that settled look of despair on his face as he watched her cutting the rashers of bacon. Far from being deceived by the sweetness of Mrs. Dowling's manner, she knew to an inflexion the test through which she was being made to pass.

And it was all over. The dream they had dreamt on Josiah Benn's tomb was ended. It had departed this life after a brief day's existence. She could see that in the misery of her lover's face.

There was one who had beheld a vision and beheld it no more. She smiled as she wrapped the rashers of bacon in their greaseproof paper and laid them on one side.

"Then I think that's all," said Mrs. Dowling. She turned to go.

"Good morning, Miss Northcote," she added sweetly.

"Good morning," said Eva.

Welford turned to follow her. With a look of despair, his eyes met Eva's across the counter.

"Good-bye," she said.

He went out into the High Street. The sun was shining. The street was full of people. Could it be the same town of Bilbrook he had seen in its wonderful silence that night of the dress rehearsal?

Where was the world he had found? He blinked his eyes.

It had gone.

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE •

THE ADVENTURE OF THE AGENT PROVOCATEUR

By STEPHEN McKENNA

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

"NOTWITHSTANDING anything to the contrary contained in my Will I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my real and personal estate to such grandson of mine as shall be the first to marry within twelve calendar months from the date of this Codicil and shall within that period legally adopt the surname of Datchley and shall within six months of his marriage give an Undertaking to reside at Datchley Castle for not less than six calendar months in each year after my death. If there shall be no such grandson, then

the provisions of my Will shall take effect."

Extract from the codicil to the last will and testament of John Datchley.

T

N the same morning and in the same words, the three principal daily papers of London informed the readers of their "personal" columns that Mrs. Robert Halliday was returning from Valescure to England in a week's time.

To a hundred out of a hundred and one the announcement provided an opportunity for murmuring—after "Bishop Blougham"—"Who wonders? And who cares?" That she must come back some time or other was recognized glumly by her daughter Brenda, hiding a guilty conscience in Scotland, by Mr. Plimsoll, the solicitor to the Datchley estate, still waiting for an heir to claim his client's millions, and by Mr. Datchley's grandsons, dejectedly marking time till her return.

Though less than half of the stipulated twelve months had passed since the old man's death, no one was any longer trying to marry in haste; and more than one or two were repenting at leisure a hurried and ill-starred attempt. It was tacitly accepted

by now that Bryan Abbotsford, who talked openly of his engagement, had the best, if not the only, chance of fulfilling the conditions of his grandfather's will; but, so long as Mrs. Halliday lingered on the Riviera, it was barren to speculate whether she would at last give her consent or whether Bryan must wait till Brenda came of age in September. It was idle to discuss whether a young man of spirit should defy the court of chancery by marrying without its leave. And, as direct and roundabout questions alike failed to elicit an answer, it was merely vexatious to enquire, as Hilary Fairfax none the less enquired eternally, whether the court had already been secretly defied.

The hundred-and-first reader, in the person of Bryan himself, cared and wondered sufficiently to take the first train for Vales-"Things," he wrote to Brenda, "are coming to a head. My cousin Hilary guesses that we're married; and he has been blackmailing me in the hope of being paid to keep his mouth shut. I have persuaded him rather disconcertingly that I am not a good subject for threats; and he has now declared war to the knife. If he can find evidence, he will expose me to the court. I must therefore get your mother's blessing on the fait accompli before he can make a move." Thus it was that, when Mrs. Halliday began her journey north, she found that her newly-acquired son-in-law had planted himself in the compartment next to hers with the determination of a man resolved to cut all knots and to bear down all opposition. As the "Blue Train "hurried towards Toulon, Bryan

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bribed the dining-car attendant to reserve him a table for two; and, while Mrs. Halliday contemplated the death of her authority and the defeat of her ambitions, he withdrew to enjoy the first moment of repose that had been vouchsafed him in three days.

"Or three months, if it comes to that," he sighed. "And, in a sense, the fun is only

just beginning."

Looking back, indeed, on their late battle, Bryan could find no fault with his handling of a delicate situation and a difficult antago-The first morning he had been content to explain his arrival by announcing that his grandfather had recently made him a very substantial present of money. Next day he added that similar sums had been given to the other grandsons and that it was Mr. Datchley's desire, as proved in letters from his lawyer, that they should all be in a position to marry if they wished. In the afternoon he challenged Mrs. Halliday bluntly to say whether she now regarded him more favourably as a suitor for her daughter's hand; when she answered that the interest on five thousand pounds would hardly house and feed Brenda, he hinted mysteriously that there might be more to come; and, as they dined together that night in precarious amity, he gave her an abstract of his grandfather's will and codicil.

"That was what really broke her morale," Bryan decided with dour satisfaction.

Vast as were the sums involved, fantastic as were the conditions attaching, Mrs. Halliday could not disbelieve in them when they were set out on the respectable note-paper of an eminent firm of family solicitors. If Bryan would take his grandfather's surname and live for half the year at Datchley Castle, it was open to him—by marrying before any of his rivals—to inherit between four and five million pounds. At present it was safe to say that there was no one else in the running.

Convinced in spite of herself, Mrs. Halliday had promised to review the position; but for Bryan, with the vengeful Hilary hanging on his flanks and with the gates of prison yawning ahead, this was hardly enough. He let fall parenthetically that Brenda and he had not changed their minds. He recalled casually to Mrs. Halliday that, when she came of age in September, Brenda would of course be her own mistress. To be perfectly frank, he added, they had considered whether they would not make a secret marriage on the strength of his legacy.

"A runaway match?" enquired Mrs. Halliday, in accents that threatened their precarious amity.

"If once we were married, nobody could unmarry us," said Bryan, still studiously hypothetical. "We could have waited till she was of age before announcing it; or, if you gave your approval, we could have had a public ceremony . . ."

"You seem to have forgotten that Brenda is a ward in chancery," Mrs. Halliday observed with the restrained jubilation of a chess-player who has called an unexpected

check '.

"If we'd bolted to British Columbia, as we intended," Bryan replied, covering his king and threatening hers in the same move, "the court wouldn't have troubled to bring us back. Unless we spend half the year at Datchley, though, we can't fulfil my grandfather's conditions."

"I should be sorry to think that was the only consideration that weighed with you,"

said Mrs. Halliday stiffly.

"It was a question of anticipating Brenda's freedom by a few months. We should have been at your mercy, of course, but I take it that you wouldn't want your son-in-law to begin his married life in prison?"

Though he was trying to keep his touch light, Bryan had begun at this point to feel that he was losing Mrs. Halliday's goodwill. Not until the next morning, when she had been given twelve hours to digest his figures, did he reveal that his hypothesis of the night before was an unalterable fact. As there was no magical difference between April and September, they had decided not to wait. Mrs. Halliday must try not to mind their taking her assent for granted. Getting down to brass tacks, said Bryan, they were married; and no power on earth could unmarry them without their consent.

"No power on earth!" he found himself repeating to the empty compartment. "And now my formidable mother-in-law must make up her mind whether it's peace or war with me," he added, as a bell tinkled along the corridor and the dining-car attendant put his head in to announce that the

second dinner was served.

II.

"As," Mrs. Halliday began ironically over the soup, "you and Brenda have acted without considering any one else, I feel it is almost impertinent for me to ask what you propose to do now."

Bryan excused himself from answering

until he had finished a whispered conversation with the wine-waiter. It might, he hoped, embarrass her to insult a man whose champagne she was drinking.
"That," he then replied, "is the very

"That," he then replied, "is the very question I wanted to ask you. If you could

say that we were forgiven . . ."

"But you're not!" Mrs. Halliday broke in implacably.

Bryan remained silent until the wine had

been brought.

"The next few months settle themselves," he answered, "if I spend them in prison."

"There's no need to be ridiculous! You have been very clever, you two. My

hands are tied."

He motioned for the wine to be poured:
"Then, if you're not giving me away,
I want you to help me! If we can have a
public wedding, if you can tell the court
that you've given your approval..."

"You need only wait till September . . . ," Mrs. Halliday interrupted in accents of irreconcilability designed to shew that she was not to be corrupted by restaurant-car champagne. "You've told me several times that Brenda will be able to snap her fingers at me then . . ."

"Until we're publicly married, I can't present my claim to my grandfather's solicitors. If I had to admit that we'd married without the leave of the court, any of the others would have me at their

mercy."

Against her will, Mrs. Halliday was impressed. Though she would not commit herself by a promise, her frigid nod seemed to concede that her son-in-law's position must be regularized.

"Brenda, you say, has been in Scotland

all this time?" she asked.

Bryan nodded, frowning:
"I've not seen her since the day we were married. She doesn't answer my letters..."

"You seem to be starting well," Mrs.

Halliday observed caustically.

"We've started so badly that I sometimes wonder if it's worth going on!" Bryan exploded. "Over this money, I mean. Brenda calls it tainted; and I'm not at all sure she isn't right. It ruined my grandfather's life; it's been hanging like a curse over my mother and her sisters; and now it's threatening to spoil everything for us."

So far as the facts had been disclosed to him, Bryan retailed the tragi-comedy by which one after another of his grandfather's presumptive heirs had been brought low"Mr. Plimsoll maintains that the old
man never meant us to have the money,"
he added. "It's all eye-wash, he says, about
wanting to preserve the name and carry
on the family. If we ever get up to Datchley, he doubts whether Brenda will consent
to live there; and, long before that, I must
make peace with Brenda. It was over this
accursed money that we quarrelled. She



"'You seem to be starting well, Mrs. Halliday observed caustically."

said I was thinking more about it than about her, when I was only thinking what it would do for her. I'd gladly go to prison, if that were the only way of getting it! She won't have that. Unless I promise to give up the money . . ."

If Mrs. Halliday's morale had been broken by the figures of the Datchley estate, it was braced by the hysterical suggestion that such an estate should be renounced.

"If you are right in your estimate of your grandfather," she interposed, "you would be doing precisely what he wanted. I must have made it clear that I shall do nothing to get you into trouble, however richly you have deserved it . . ."

"If you'll square the court, I'll keep

"I suggested a pooling-scheme when the will was read," Luke Abbotsford put in. "You turned it down then . . ."

"And I turn it down whenever our cousin Hilary proposes it! That's not the same, though, as refusing to go shares with my own brothers. Well, I've come back from Valescure with Mrs. Halliday; and she's given her blessing. The arrangements for



cousin Hilary out of mischief," Bryan promised eagerly.

On arriving in London four-and-twenty hours later, he left his luggage to be cleared next day and telephoned to assemble his brothers in consultation. The time, he felt, had come for him to collect allies; and he opened the conference by announcing that, if the others would help him to fortune, he would undertake that they should participate in it.

the wedding will go forward as soon as she has obtained the approval of the court."

Bryan paused to observe how the announcement was being received. His brother Martin mumbled an inarticulate congratulation. Luke was watching with raised eyebrows and a faintly suspicious smile.

"I take it," he said at last, "that the half-witted Hilary is right for once: you and Brenda are married already?"

"Assume it for the purposes of argument!" laughed Bryan.

"If Hilary gets wind of it, he'll inform against you," said Martin.

"He can't get wind of it, unless Mrs. Halliday or Brenda or you give me away."

"If he acts on suspicion?"

"He tried that before! I don't want to take any chances, though; and, as he is admittedly out for blood, I want you to make peace for me. If he refuses, we must find a means of putting him out of action. You're always full of ingenuity, Luke . . . "

He broke off as a maid came in with a

"I have found a letter," Mrs. Halliday began, "from a Mr. Fairfax, whom I take to be your cousin. He wishes to see me on business connected with your grandfather's will. As I can only think he wants to know the position with you and Brenda, I have told him that the marriage has taken place and meets with my approval. I need hardly say that this is far from being the whole truth, but I presume it is what you wished me to say . . . ? "

Without reading to the end of the letter,

Bryan tossed it to Luke.

"What I wished her to say!" he groaned. "She's told him the one thing he wanted to find out," said Luke thoughtfully. "It's

too late to make peace now."

"And it's too late to offer Hilary a share." Bryan answered. "Too late to give up the money: I suppose even Brenda will see that now. Hilary won't rest till he's had me committed for contempt! And I've no intention of going to prison if I can avoid it! Are you two going to see me through?"

There was a short silence; then Martin

answered:

"You can count me in. I dislike Hilary. Short of murder or kidnapping . . ."

Bryan turned, with an expression of appeal, to Luke. Though Martin was invaluable for hand-to-hand fighting, a staff-mind was required to direct the war.

"And you?"

"There must be no brawling," Luke stipulated fastidiously. "Not, indeed, that it will be necessary. If we give him enough rope, I believe Hilary can be induced to hang himself. I have always aspired to try my hand as an agent provocateur," he continued with a dreamy smile. "If you will leave it all to me . . ."

"What are you going to do?" Bryan

· asked uneasily.

"I am going to put Hilary out of harm's way. As he is straining every muscle to get you in prison, it would be very fitting if we sent him to prison in your place."

III.

AT breakfast-time next day Bryan called on the wife from whom he had parted within eight hours of their marriage. If they had not been reconciled by their own inclinations or by the imperious arguments of Mrs. Halliday, they would have been driven together by a danger which became greater and nearer with every hour.

"Hilary's like a mad dog," he explained; "and our only hope is to muzzle him before

he can bite."

"But how are you going to do it?" asked Brenda.

"I'm leaving that to Luke. He's mounting guard now. I must join him, by the

way.

"Can't I come too? I might get the right side . . . If Hilary saw that he couldn't injure you without injuring me . . . "

Bryan shook his head. Neither bribes nor caresses would turn Hilary from his purpose. There was no "right" side of his nature to be aroused.

"And we're not going on our knees to vermin of that kind," he answered. "This has to be fought out. It's a big prize we're playing for, Brenda; so far, things have been almost too easy. I feel this struggle has been appointed for us. If we're to defeat my amiable grandfather . . . I'll look in and take you out to dinner, if I haven't been arrested before then," he ended jauntily.

Brenda bit her lip and turned away as he hurried from the house. A clock was striking ten; and she began to count the hours that must pass before she saw Bryan again. Eight or nine . . . He had not told her where he was going nor what he proposed to do. An agent provocateur, she believed, was a deceitful and desperate character who stirred up mobs with a view to embroiling them with the police, but there seemed no assurance that it would not be the agent rather than his dupe who was marched off to prison. She began to think of the headlines and contents-bills: MYSTERIOUS AFFRAY . . . Then the telephone-bell ravished the mid-morning silence; and Bryan informed her briefly that a ring had been drawn round the lair of their quarry.

"We're in Bloomsbury Square," explained. "Hilary's a bottle-washer of some kind, you know, at the Biological Institute. We've found out that, when he comes off duty, he has an appointment with rather a low-down firm of solicitors in the City. The meaning of that is clear enough, so we're planning to intercept him. Goodbye! Bless you! I'll report again when there's anything to tell you."

The next stage in the campaign was described by Martin, who invited himself to

lunch with Brenda.

"Luke is working on the right lines," he declared, eating rapidly, with one eye on his watch. "We nearly had Master Hilary before he could break cover."

"You've not muzzled him yet?" Brenda

asked.

"We must get him excited first; then he'll lose control. It was charmingly simple," Martin continued with a laugh. followed him into the Tube lift; and Luke slipped his watch into Hilary's pocket and told the man at the gate that he'd been robbed. We were all searched, of course, and Hilary was found with the goods. appearance was against him, as he was covered with chemicals and looked as if he hadn't shaved for a week, but unfortunately he kept his head and told the ticket-man to communicate with the Biological Institute and ask the principal to identify him. That seemed good enough; and he got off. I think he's shaken, though. I left him steadying his nerves on tea and buns near Chancery Lane. . . . Good-bye! keep you posted."

The campaign, Brenda surmised, must have been suspended for luncheon, as the next tidings, arriving by special messenger, did not reach her till the middle of the

afternoon.

"I can't use the telephone here," Bryan wrote, " so I must keep this till I find an office to take it. I'm in a cabman's shelter near the Post Office tube-station, keeping watch while Luke prepares the next stage. The cabmen are capital fellows, not a bit stand-offish, and all imbued with the Englishman's love of the chase. When Hilary came in sight, I got one of them to stand at the corner house opposite the shelter with a tape-measure and a notebook. He asked Hilary to keep a finger on the tape while he took the other end round the corner; and, when Hilary was in position, he fixed the measure with a pin and came back to us. Hilary has been standing for a quarter of an hour with his finger pressed to that wall! Every five minutes or so he clears his throat and pipes up: 'I say, sir . . .'; but, if this isn't 'loitering in a suspicious manner', I don't know what is and I'm going to warn the police. When Hilary's told to move on and finds how he's been employing his time, I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he let fly at the police and got himself arrested."

Almost before Brenda had digested his letter, Bryan telephoned from a call-office in Holborn that the fox had doubled on his tracks and was apparently losing his sense of direction. The tape-measure, he explained gleefully, had been confiscated; and Hilary had been obliged to give his name and address. As he seemed too much startled and dazed to resist the representatives of the law, he had not been detained, but it would now be only a matter of moments before he was involved in fresh trouble. Martin. added Bryan, was hurrying ahead along Oxford Street and enquiring at all jewellers' shops whether a shabbily dressed young man with acid-stains on his clothes had passed that wav.

"It is inconceivable," he asserted, "that any man of spirit will allow himself to be hustled from one shop-window after another without maintaining, if necessary by force, his right to linger as and where he pleases."

Brenda looked anxiously at her watch. Unless "rather low-down solicitors" worked longer hours than their reputable brethren, Hilary had missed his appointment for that day; but he would return to his task withfresh fury on the morrow.

"I wish I knew where this was going to end," she sighed down the telephone.

"I've little doubt that Hilary's beginning to wish that, too," Bryan replied without noticeable sympathy.

The final report was delivered by the elegant and debonair agent provocateur himself, who explained that he was compelled to withdraw from the chase in order to keep

a dinner-engagement,

"But he's a beaten fox," Luke assured Brenda. "He'll turn at bay now at any moment. Bryan told you about the jewellers? Our Hilary very nearly lost command of himself when he wasn't even allowed to cool his heated brow on a friendly plateglass window. You see, we've kept him on the run for a good many hours . . ."

"But you haven't got him yet! Why doesn't he go home?" asked Brenda. "It's too late for him to do anything now."

"That's what we rather feared he might do," Luke answered, "so I sent Bryan to plug the keyhole of his chambers. If the worst comes to the worst, he'll be arrested for trying to break into his own quarters, but I think we shall corner him before that. He was having a little well-earned refreshment when last I saw him; and, as Martin has warned the manageress against a shabby creature who's trying to pass bad coins, I feel the explosion is almost overdue. Don't you feel," Luke enquired with a delicately shrinking movement, "that it's better to let a man like Hilary work out his own destruction? One detests the idea of violence when it's only necessary to place one's adversary in a false position . . ."

"But where is Hilary all this time?" Brenda enquired, failing wholly to detect sense or competence under the airiness of

Luke's manner.

"For the life of me I can't tell you! I understand that he looked seriously upset when he rushed out of the tea-shop. He'd forgotten his hat. And his hair was in his eyes. I've no doubt, though, that he'll go back for his hat; and we've tried to arrange for him to be received by all the friends he's been making to-day. There's the ticket-collector and the policeman by the cabmen's shelter and the one who moved him on from the jeweller's . . . Quite a pleasant little waking nightmare! It would unnerve a stronger man than Hilary. . . . Well, you'll let me know if there's anything more I can do?"

Brenda walked with her visitor to the front-door and stood looking up and down the empty street. Bryan had promised that, unless he was himself under arrest, he would not fail to call and take her out to dinner. There was no sign of him. He had not telephoned for two hours. Shutting the door, she was returning with a heavy heart to her own room when her eye was caught by head-lines in the evening paper:

"MYSTERIOUS AFFRAY: FIGHT IN OXFORD-STREET TEA-SHOP."

IV.

So Luke's boasting was justified!

The "mysterious affray", Brenda read, consisted of an unexplained and, apparently, unprovoked assault on two young men who were drinking coffee and playing dominoes in the smoking-room of the New Blue Kitten Tea Rooms. The assailant, who was shabbily dressed and without a hat, had already figured in a dispute with the manageress over some question of wrong change or a doubtful coin, after which he had rushed into the street in an excited condition. He was hardly less excited when he returned

to claim his missing hat; and he was heard muttering to himself suspiciously. The table at which he had been sitting was now occupied by two other customers; and, on catching sight of them, the young man had made a furious and insane attack with his umbrella, declaring—so far as could be understood at the neighbouring tables—that the new-comers were in league to persecute him. Though he was quickly overpowered, the manageress felt obliged to call in the police; and, as the young man refused to give his name or address, he had been taken into custody.

As Brenda came to the end of the report, a taxi drove to the door; and Bryan, bearing the traces of his late encounter in a dented hat and a broken collar, raced up the steps.

"If your mother's disengaged, we can clear things up at once," he told Brenda swiftly. "I've furnished Mr. Plimsoll with evidence of our marriage and I've asked him to come round here at once. It's been a race, I can tell you! I've said that I'll fulfil the other conditions of the codicil. When we get the consent of the court, we can have a public wedding . . ."

"But your cousin . . . ?" Brenda began.

"He's safely under lock and key! If we leave him where he is and if he still withholds his name, I should say he'll be given about ten days without the option of a fine; and we can do a lot in ten days. When he comes out, too, he'll find that his precious institute hasn't any very urgent need of him . . ."

"When he comes out, he'll be like half-a-dozen mad dogs!" Brenda cried in dismay.

"Before he comes out, I shall drop a hint that enquiries should be made into the condition of his mind," Bryan answered. "He's tried to blackmail me! He's tried to ruin me! If he'd had his way, I should be where he is now . . . Of course, if he'll give me an undertaking that he won't molest me, I'll bail him out myself; but we have the whip-hand now for the first time and I'm not going to put myself at his mercy again. Ah, here comes Mr. Plimsoll!"

With the arrival of the solicitor, the atmosphere lost much of its electricity; and for an hour, in the presence of Mrs. Halliday and Brenda, Bryan described the course of the warfare that had brought him to his present pass. Without comment or change of expression, Mr. Plimsoll heard of the secret marriage and of Mrs. Halliday's tardy acquiescence, of Hilary's suspicions and of

the vendetta which, like so many vendettas, threatened to involve both parties in an equal ruin. At the end he invited Bryan to explain why he had been called in.

"We wanted your advice," said Brenda,

speaking for both.

Mr. Plimsoll smiled sardonically:

"I seem to remember advising your husband that, if he married exactly as he has married, he would find himself in exactly the position that he is in. When I expounded Mr. Datchley's will, I advised him and the others to continue in the normal course of their lives as though they had never heard of this money. That would still be my advice. As an obiter dictum, even at this eleventh hour, I do not believe that any of you will benefit to the extent of one farthing . . ."

Three voices assailed him simultaneously, then simultaneously stopped and went on

"I was given to understand . . . ,"

began Mrs. Halliday.

"But we've qualified!" exclaimed Brenda.

"Unless the money's walked away, I've won it!" Bryan asserted. "Even if I have to go to quod first . . ."

Mr. Plimsoll sighed and shook his head.
"You have fulfilled one of the conditions,"
he told Bryan. "I suppose you won't
object to taking your grandfather's name?
What about living at Datchley, though?
You should have a look at the place before
you commit yourself. And you should take

your wife with you . . ."

" Is it haunted?" Brenda asked uneasily. ""I have never heard chains clanking nor seen Covenanters walking with their heads under their arms," answered Mr. Plimsoll. "At the same time, the place is saturated with the personality—may I say without offence, the rather sinister personality?—of John Datchley, who—I shall never cease to believe—designed to cheat you all out of your inheritance by one means or another. He wanted to keep Datchley Castle for him-He has kept it, in a sense: you have none of you seriously challenged him yet, his body is still lying there in possession. . . . But you will see for yourselves. My advice to-day is the same as when I read the will to you: at that time you were all happier than you are now. And, if I disclosed the confessions that have been made to me in the last few months, you would think many times before swelling your grandfather's triumph."

As he finished speaking, Bryan hastened to forestall the others:

"I followed your advice in one respect, sir: I wanted to marry Brenda, I intended to marry her and I have married her, without a thought for the old man's money. As we're entitled to it, though, I don't mean to let it go. When I remember how that old miscreant treated my mother and the rest of us . . "

"You are fighting your grandfather on behalf of the family? It is unfortunate that one member should—thanks to you—be lying at this moment in prison . . ."

"That's really where I wanted you to advise me," Bryan broke in eagerly. "If Hilary promises to behave himself, can't we get him out? If you told the beaks that he was a bit worked up and that for the sake of the family . . ."

"I don't suppose for a moment he will give me the undertaking you require,"

answered Mr. Plimsoll.

"If we get him out, he may feel some sort of obligation," Bryan hazarded dubiously. "If we leave him where he is, he'll go for us like a wild beast."

"From my observation of Hilary," replied Mr. Plimsoll, "I should say that, if you leave him where he is, you'll send him off his head. . . . Well, you will hear from me in the morning."

As he bowed himself out of the room, Bryan asked permission to ring for a whiskeyand-soda and some sandwiches. Since eight o'clock that morning he had neither eaten nor rested; since eight o'clock on the morning of the day when Mrs. Halliday announced her impending return to England, he seemed to have been planning, arguing and intriguing. And, as one obstacle was surmounted, he found another rising to take its place. For more than three months now he had watched as his rivals dropped out of the race; he had waited for Brenda to compose their quarrel; and he had maintained an inscrutable front as Hilary probed and questioned. Now, when his wife was restored to him, when Mrs. Halliday had given at least her formal consent, when the announcement had been made to the press and the worst he had to fear was that Hilary should turn informer, Mr. Plimsoll must needs poison Brenda's mind against the house in which they were to spend half of every year for the remainder of their

"Don't be put off Datchley till you've seen it," Bryan suggested carelessly.

"He spoke almost as though there was a curse on it," said Brenda, avoiding any more direct answer.

"If there is, we'll break it. You said there was a curse on the money, but we're going to break that. This is the last lap! Don't let me down when I'm in sight of the post, Brenda!"

v.

AT noon on the following day Hilary Fairfax was reclining on a sofa in Mrs. Halliday's bou-His selfdoir. respect, shattered by a night in a cell, had been in part restored by a hot bath and a shave: and. though he was obviously embarrassed by appear-

ing in a woman's dressing-gown, he seemed to be faintly consoled by the thought that his clothes were being pressed and freed from the traces of his late incarceration.

How his liberation had been effected he did not, as he repeated at intervals to Brenda, even begin to understand. The present scene, like the one that had led up to it, was part of an evil dream in which overbearing policemen were always tapping him on the shoulder or moving him on or making slow entries in note-books or cautioning him that anything he said would be used in evidence against him. At recurrent points in his dream he glimpsed the mocking faces of his cousins, who whispered significantly and tapped their foreheads. During the night, when a falsely suave constable advised him as a matter of form to plead guilty and he found himself embarked on an interminable story of a millionaire grandfather,



"Wildly thrown, the missiles fell for the most part harmlessly to the floor; but, when a cut-glass stopper struck the low-hanging chandelier, the tinkle of jingling glass seemed to ring as a challenge."

an eccentric will and a cousin who was bent on ruining him, he became convinced, from the expression of the audience, that his mind was clouded; and, when he was confronted in the morning with the unexpected presence of his grandfather's solicitor, he wondered only whether he was being detained for crime or insanity. By this time, indeed, he was too broken-spirited to resist or object. He listened dully while Mr. Plimsoll explained that everything had been satisfactorily arranged. Dully he followed his rescuer into a private car; and to his dazed perceptions there was a fitting turn in the nightmare when he found himself in a house peopled by his persecutors. Figures appeared and disappeared mysteriously as he trudged upstairs; whispering voices confided that some one really did not know who he was and that on no account must some one else see him until he was steadier.



"You see," explained Brenda, "I want to end this ridiculous feud between you and Bryan. You realize how you come to be here? We hushed things up and got you out by saying you were overwrought and not responsible for your actions. No one knows anything. No one at your Institute, I mean," she added significantly. "No one will know anything unless we give you away . . ."

Hilary became suddenly rigid, changing for a painful moment to the man of whom he had been hitherto the insubstantial shadow.

"Is this a threat?" he demanded.

"It's a statement of the position,"

for going out of his way to humiliate me! He's always humiliating me! They all are! I know I'm not clever—they never let me forget it!—, I can't pass exams, I shall never have a career, or make money. That I didn't mind! I was making some kind of position for myself until Bryan turned me into a laughing-stock! I resolved that he should smart for that! And he shall!"

The storming voice rose shrill and broke. Maddened by this exhibition of his own weakness, Hilary sprang to his feet, stumbling with a crash over the tray. For a moment he stared stupidly at the jumbled and broken

crockery and glass. Then, with an ungovernable access of rage, he picked up knives, forks and cruets, sobbing and panting as he stooped, and flung them at the windows and mirrors. Wildly thrown, the missiles fell for the most part harmlessly to the floor; but, when a cut-glass stopper struck the lowhanging chandelier, the tinkle of jingling glass seemed to ring as a challenge. Hilary gazed for a moment at the pear-shaped pendants and then bombarded them with everything that came to hand. The noise of furniture kicked over and of windows broken combined, with Brenda's cries for help to bring the men up from the dining-room; and, as Hilary, laughing madly, smashed the electric lights with his bare and bleeding hand, Bryan and Mr. Plimsoll hurried in and pinioned him. After a short struggle the frantic arms became still and the twisting body sank limply to the floor. The laughter turned to dismal crying; and Hilary Fairfax crawled like a maimed animal, on all fours, into a corner.

Mr. Plimsoll tiptoed into the passage, beckening the others to follow him.

"If you've a doctor you can trust, you should send for him," he told Brenda. "A stiff dose of bromide is what that young man wants. I can't say I'm surprised."

Through the open door Bryan looked back, white-faced, at the whimpering creature on the floor.

"Are we responsible for this, sir?" he asked.
"For what? He's neurotic naturally.
You may have cured him, or you may have sent him out of his mind," Mr. Plimsoll

answered. "It's an obsession with him that he has always failed at everything. . . . Mark you, I don't defend the way you and your brothers behaved to him yesterday. but you needn't fear he's going to expose you, There's no need to call for 'undertakings'."

Bryan shivered and led the way down-

stairs to the telephone-room.

"I'm not sure I shan't retire from competition," he muttered. "If I have Hilary on my conscience . . . By Jove, I'd give half of all Gaffer Datchley's millions to undo this!"

Mr. Plimsoll laughed a little unsym-

pathetically.

"I feel it would give your grandfather exquisite pleasure to feel that his benevolence had brought so much suffering to one of you and so much remorse to another. It's too late, however, to turn back now, though you shouldn't talk of giving away half of anything until it's yours to give."

Bryan looked for a moment as dazed and unstrung as his cousin; then his lower lip

shot truculently forward.

"You think I'm going to let the old scoundrel beat me on the post?" he enquired.

"In the last twenty-four hours," replied the solicitor with a shrug, "he has brought one of you within reach of prison and another of a lunatic asylum. He has beaten you jointly and severally up to the present. Within the last twenty-four seconds you've tried to throw up the sponge... Do I think you'll win? I don't know! If you do, you must shew yourself to be a man of quite unusual resource."...

Hereafter follows The Adventure of the Resourceful Heir.

LYONNESSE.

WHERE long grey waves across the sullen sea
Roll smoothly from the sunset's dying fires,
Once was a city of a hundred spires,
Set in fair hills, upon a pleasant lea;
And still across the waters, eerily,
When the loud winds are hushed its far bells ring,
And those who hear are silent, marvelling
That a thin sound has immortality.
So Time's illimitable waters sweep
Over lost men and nations, levelling all.
Yet, sometimes, bravely, from the shadowy deep
A clear voice greets us like a clarion-call.
Though towers and ships and armies leave no trace,
Men's thoughts still move upon the waters' face.
M. F. KNOX.

THE SADDLER'S • • SHOP • •

By MRS. HENRY DUDENEY

■ ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

IMOTHY he'd had quite enough to drink already, although it wanted an hour to dinner-time. Emily, his wife, sitting here in the kitchen, looked furtively through the little window into the shop: and so she was thinking. The thought came in the sudden haphazard way of a thought: she hated the shop just as much as she loved him. That was it, and nothing would make her leave off loving him. Many a woman would have run away, many a woman would have taken to drink too, just for company. She had kept sober, kept chaste, and she loved him.

But the old house and the saddler's shop she had loathed from the first. It came into her mind, sitting here watching Timothy through the window, that perhaps this dirty old place was responsible for her misery. When people had lived in a house generation after generation, was it not likely that they left behind them some sour weight of sin? In a new house with new furniture, Timothy might have kept sober. And, apart from funny thoughts of sin and dead people, there was the actual dirt of an old house. She was always cleaning, yet nothing ever looked clean. Seemed as if old houses grew dirt, just as chalky soil, so the old folk said, grew flint-stones! You couldn't keep pace with flint-stones or cobwebs. And she looked up into the heavy rafter where a black web with a fat black spider had come since yesterday. And let them "For my spirit is broke," she stay there! whispered.

Then she peeped through the window again: sitting with her arms stretched out and her hands clasped rigidly between her knees. This was a way she had of sitting when her spirit was vexed. Seemed to her that she was always spying on her husband. She saw the old brown counter deeply

scored and cluttered with tools. On one side were three high stools.

The day was dirty, cold, and wet. Looking through the lattice, she saw one desolate

bird flying into the dingy sky.

This bird and a man calling rabbit-skins as he tinkled a thin bell expressed to her with startling fidelity the sparseness of her life. And she glowered round the old room, at sullen brown rafters, broken plaster and a pungent haze of wood-smoke: for the wind was in the wrong quarter this morning.

Timothy was drunkish. A flabby, foolish man supposed to be stuffing a horse-collar. There he was. His face she could not see, but how bitterly she imaged it. A handsome face, yet spread and veined: a face with a loose mouth. His mouth, so she was thinking, looked cruel since he had been fitted with false teeth. She could see his broad shoulders and his mop of hair, she could see one hand aimlessly moving amongst the fluffy mass which was to stuff the horse-collar.

Heaven knew that there was little enough for a saddler to do these days without him getting fuddled over the jobs that did come in!

The pot upon the trivet boiled over and she blest that pot, for it made her move and bustle about, made her look at the clock and remember in a panic that the potatoes were not even peeled: to say nothing of being put on to boil. So she was stirring the stewed mutton and sniffing at it; tasting it, adding a pinch more salt and a shake of pepper. The potatoes were now boiling in their small pot. All this activity consoled her. Just as well to lay the cloth! She did this, then went and sat by the window looking down the village street: all wet and cold and hopeless. The man with the rabbit-skins had tinkled himself wanly into

the void, and she beheld nothing that was alive or warm.

Market days and Saturday nights, men and boys would come in and talk to Timothy, bringing him small odd jobs. She recalled their laughter and their silly faces; as she sat here now with her hands tense between her knees. Oh, yes, she could see them. And what fools men were: especially when they'd had a drop! Hot the shop would be, with a bright paraffin lamp burning. Sometimes Timothy would be doing something with a blow-pipe. This would add to the confusion. Seemed to her that on Saturday nights the saddler's shop was a little mad. But it was quiet now, with Timothy sitting alone behind the counter supposed to be stuffing a horse-collar. Brown rafters above his head; always thick oak rafters everywhere! Hanging from a hook, the big lamp with its white dome, hanging from another hook, the old black leather bottle with a patch cut out of the front. He kept nails and odd things in it. There was a large piece of new leather slung upon the wall; it had the biting colour of dried orange-peel. Emily liked to look at that, for colour cheered her. A row of dog-collars on a string were blue, or red, or green. and shiny collars for little dogs. there were the burly ones studded thickly with brass nails. These were the collars to make you think of a mastiff or a bloodhound.

She arose at last and walked aimlessly to the window in the piquant checked frock of cheap cotton stuff that she wore. She had made it herself. She was not a young woman, yet there was about her the look of some sad coquetry.

She was not young, but her spirit had always been gay; perhaps reckless. She was one of those who see and who act in a flash.

On Sundays, sitting at the window, she watched the girls go by in their finery and she would long for silk stockings to come like a caress up her leg. Moreover, she would have loved what in her mind she vaguely called a "splendid home." Shiny new furniture still smelling of the shop; a parlour floor sticky with varnish; bright carpets and stiff curtains: that was the sort of place she wanted. And once, as she looked round the kitchen with its grey stone floor that might have been gravestones, she had flamed out, "I'd like to set fire to you!" She had even senselessly stuck out her hand for matches.

There had been nobody to listen. So what did this matter? Even if her husband had been there, he would not have understood. For only a few things reached his brain, and when they reached it they got muddled up. He could only look at you in his soft way. She wished that when he was drunk he would turn savage and not maudlin. You might respect a man who shot out his fist and knocked you down. Drunk or sober, a person like that remained a man.

She sat at the window dully waiting for dinner-time and for the potatoes to get soft. Once she arose and tried to stick a fork into them. Again she looked into the shop and Timothy was sitting there just as he had been when she stirred the stew and salted it. How could such a man expect to keep his business? Motors or no motors. she knew very well that, if only he'd kept sober, he might still have earned a comfortable living as a saddler. As it was, they did not make both ends meet. Only this morning, when she told him that the coal was low, he had said he couldn't afford to pay for more. A pretty thing, wouldn't it be, to have to sit in this draughty old house and freeze through March? Yet even that, to freeze through March with him in this old house that was so shabby and so gloomy: even that would not destroy her love. He was her man and he always had been. Why, she hardly knew. Perhaps God would tell her when the time came: His good time. No woman in this world could hope to understand such things. You had only to look round at the married couples you knew to see what fools they had made of them-Yet, given her time over again, she would not have chosen differently. For she loved him. She would do anything in the world to please him. She'd be content to put her hand on the choppingblock and cut it off, if only that would keep him sober! The sight of his head seen through the dusty little window stirred her to sullen ecstasy as if, still, he were her lover.

She looked at the clock. Time to dish up. The stew smelled savoury and it gave her an appetite at once. Yet Timothy would hardly take a mouthful, and that in itself was enough to break any wife's heart. She knew what would happen; the same thing over again! That would happen. Nearly every day when he came in to dinner, and when he sniffed at his food and made faces at it, and pushed the plate away,

she'd call him a pig for not leaving the drink alone. She'd scream out, "Cooking's wasted on you. Get your victuals out of a beer engine, don't you?" Yet when she heard her own voice rising and ranting, she would feel with sick surprise, "That you shouting, Emily Packham?" And she would remember how they would murmur together—ring-doves—in their courting time!

She had her hands round the handle of the pot full of stew, she was preparing to lift it from the trivet, when she heard the garden gate creak, and going to the window she saw Ted Huggett's housekeeper, Maria Helmsley, come quickly up the path. She could guess why Maria had come. And her heart went cold as she opened the door and as the wind blew in, cutting you to the bone. Wind and a snarl of rain!

"Come in, Mrs. Helmsley."

"No, no, I got to get back, and I wants you to come with me. He's worse, my dear. He's asking for you. Doctor thinks he won't last out the day."

"Dying—Ted?"

"Well, you know he's been bad this three weeks."

"Yes. But dying! I never thought

"We don't think till it comes." Maria Helmsley was dry. "Suppose you'd better ask your husband's leave?"

"Ask him! Think I'm a slave, Mrs. Helmsley?"

"Law! Dunno what I thinks, dear. S'long since I bin a widder. Reckon I've forgot."

Emily took an old mackintosh from behind the door. She found a cap of Timothy's and clapped it on her head. Then she opened the door leading into the shop and shut it carefully behind her. Old Maria Helmsley, left alone in the kitchen, looked through at the two of them as if she stared at a picture. She saw their lips move and she wanted to know what they were saying. For everyone in the village knew about Mrs. Packham and Ted Huggett. Emily was saying:

"Ted's worse, and Maria Helmsley's come to fetch me. There's some stewed mutton in the pot and the potatoes are steaming; so you can get your own dinner. And mind you don't mess up the clean cloth, unless you want to make me wild when I get back."

She smiled with stiff pleading. She

wondered if he understood what she was saying: sitting there with his head down and his big hand clawing into a bag full of fuzzy stuff that was woolly yet wiry.

He looked up. His mouth was stretched and those false teeth were cruel in their white perfection. They seemed to flash incredible things at her; so that she wondered what Timothy was feeling. For he was not drunk now. She had startled him too much. She had said to Maria that she would not ask his leave. But now she was saying with odd humility, "Mind if I go?"

"Make no difference if I did mind. You'd

go."

"Yes; reckon I should. When a man's dying, you don't bother about anything else. He comes first."

"P'r'aps he always did."

"That's a lie," she was fierce, "and you know it."

She turned from him and as she went she flung a scared look round the shop; just as if she felt she might never see it again.

"Mind if I go?" she repeated as she

stood at the door.

"Oh-get out!" returned Timothy, and went on trying to stuff the horse-collar.

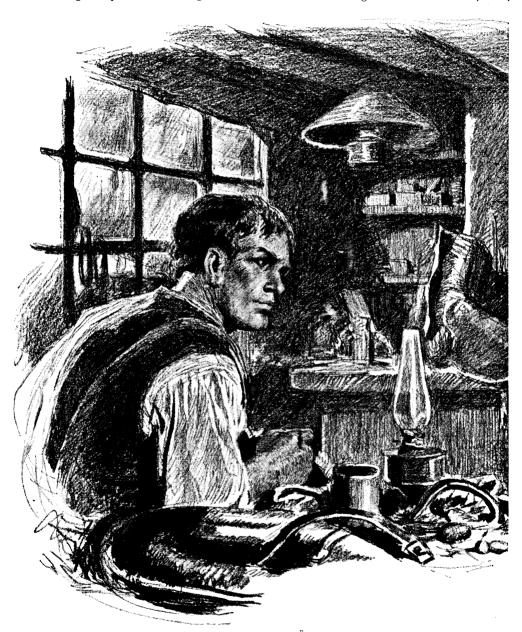
She went in to Maria and they walked together, not saying a word; walked up the wet street; with a spatter of rain and a flurry of leaves; and now and then a bird that might have been a leaf.

When Emily got into Ted's place, she thought first of the house and not of himself. She could not help this, for everything that she saw delighted her. Ted had been a builder. He had worked hard, kept sober, been able to retire. And he had built himself this lovely little place that stood in a square neat garden. The patch of grass was so shorn and trimmed that it might have been green velvet. Each little flower in summer-time stood six inches apart in the beds; heads well up, like flowers that had been wired. And Ted would never allow creepers on the cold white rough-cast of his house. It was an ugly place, painstaking, yet without imagination. It was one of hundreds and thousands that deface the green country. Yet Emily worshipped it, outside and in. To live here, with Timothy always sober, would have been heaven. A little neat garden in front, a small, most beautiful orchard behind, shining furniture within!

She was staring into the parlour on the left and then staring on the right into the small room with the big window which Ted had used as an office. He had retired, yet had still kept busy. And, although she had

This was a house to be proud of; and then she thought of her own.

"Take off your mackintosh before you go up," Maria was saying with crisp authority, "and don't hang it on the hat-stand, dear,



never liked his housekeeper, Maria Helmsley, she certainly did admire the way that woman kept the stairs. They went up straight and narrow like a ladder; with lovely moss-green carpet and with brass rods so rubbed that they made your eyes wink.

for wet things take off the polish. I've said that to Mr. Huggett times and often. Bring it along into the kitchen."

Emily obeyed, and as she went she flung a respectful glance at the hat-stand. It was of red mahogany, with knobbled arms like the boughs of a monkey-tree. She took off her cap also and then went to the little glass that hung on the wall near the window. She smoothed her crisp, upstanding hair. Maria, at the range, stirring cornflour.

Emily went off with her head flung back and her eyes shining. She did not love Ted Huggett, and she never had. Yet it was wonderful and dreadful to think of him lying up there dying. True that we all



She turned from him and as she went she flung a scared look round the shop; just as if she felt she might never see it again."

watched her sourly. They did not love each other. There was an ironic emphasis to the housekeeper's reiterated "dear."

"This cornflour's caught," she was grumbling. "There's no end to the mess and the trouble with sick cookery. You'll have to go up to him alone, dear."

"Of course I'll go up to him alone, Mrs.

Helmslev."

come to it, yet Death does not lose its surprise.

Ted's bedroom was small, yet pretentious. A bow window took up one side of the wall, and through it she saw the hopeless sky, the lost leaves, the drifting sparrows. His bed faced the window and the winter light was cruel to his worn face. It was a beautiful new bed and part of a fumed oak suite. The head of it was rounded and railed, reminding Emily of the Windsor chair in the kitchen at home. She did not love it any more for that. People were fools, when they made new furniture, to go copying the old. If they knew as much as she did about old sticks and old houses! She sighed. She stared at Ted's gay eiderdown and then thought of the thin white quilt with the knotted fringe on their bed at home. Everything Ted had was new and clean and lovely. It had never belonged to other people; that was why she hated her own furniture so much. The dead had chosen and paid for it. Dead finger-marks, as you might say, all over it.

Ted was looking out at her from this narrow luxurious bed and his weak voice

was saying with grim simplicity:

"I'm bad, Emily." He watched her as she stood there; with her long face, her lively eyes, and healthy skin. He loved her funny frock, that was

so cheap and gay.

"Sit down. I can't see you properly with your back to the light."

So she sat on the chair beside him and he held her hand. It was a simple gesture; yet she did not wish to be too near him. For his slightest touch filled her with soft aversion, and always had. It occurred to her strangely, as his cold fingers burrowed about her warm ones, that in marriage there might be worse things than poverty.

I'm dying, Emily."

"Come now, you mustn't talk like that, Ted."

His low voice rambled off in a detached, amused way: "District nurse comes twice a day, and old Maria's good to me. Doctor said something about a hospital. Don't let them take me away from home, Em."

"That they shan't." She was emphatic. "Your other hand too, Emily, please."

So she gave it, and on the satin eiderdown his hands were fondling hers in a fierce rapture. His eyes were fixed upon her and yet she felt that he was looking through and beyond her at something else.

"You was a pretty girl, and you're a fine woman still. Not a grey hair in all that

red mop."

His fading voice saying these warm things, his dull eyes trying to twinkle, shocked

"And you knew very well when you married Timothy that I wanted you more!"

Again she was shocked and ineffably:

that he should speak so upon his deathbed! He let her hands loose and fell back upon his pillows.

"Turn the key in the door. I've got you

to myself and I'll keep you!"

She looked at him, arose, locked the door, returned to her chair. It was her habit to obey a man. Although she ranted at her husband for getting drunk, she never forgot that he was her master.

"Years since you married Tim, and

you've had a hard time."

He did not touch her hands again. He spoke with dim, fraternal fondness. Into her eyes came a flash of wifely loyalty. It came and it went; for you must not and you dared not deceive a dying man. What was the good? Presently he would know everything. The dead at once attained to infinite wisdom. This, in a confused way, was part of her creed.

She admitted, "Yes, it's been hard."

"Made my will the day you got married. Hadn't got much to leave then, but now I've got plenty." He was speaking to her in painful snatches, yet with an emphasis which tried to be gleeful. "I was a young chap then and living in rooms. But I meant to get on, and I knew I'd never rest till I owned a house. There's something dreadful to my mind in living in another man's house. I'm like a snail: made to carry my place on my back."

He laughed a little, then panted. She gave

him a tender, warning look. "Don't talk so much, Ted."

"I must talk, my dear, to you. My last chance. So I made my will, Emily; me living in rooms as a young chap. And I left any house property I might die possessed of and any furniture to you. Cousin Ann's the only relation I've got living and she'd get it if I died without a will. But now she only takes my money."

He looked at her. She looked back at him with sombre eagerness. The most marvellous hope was now a growing sprig

in her breast.

"If you had a nice house, make you happy, wouldn't it, Em?"

She nodded.

"You hated the saddler's place from the first. I could see that. And think I haven't noticed, all these years?"

She said quickly, "But I loved Timothy."

"Needn't tell me that; though it doesn't hurt now as it did once. I'm going to a place where nothing hurts."

She flung at him her troubled stare.

"You think that, Ted? A place where nothing hurts."

He twisted his face.

"Don't know that I care to think too much, dear."

"Frightens you, does it?" She was pitiful.

He smiled.

"I'd rather talk to you about my will, Emily. The lawyer who drew it up and the two witnesses, they're all dead. But the will's in the top drawer of the dressingtable, and the key of the drawer's here in a wash-leather bag under my pillow." His hand grovelled and roamed among the bedclothes.

"I can't properly guide my hand, and if I could, my fingers wouldn't grip. You find it."

So she put in her hand and found it; while he said to her breathlessly, his aimless hand pointing:

"Your pocket."

She nodded and slipped the bag in, with the little key inside it. She was full of fierce joy that was very young and alive, very wicked. But she couldn't help that. She forgot that this was a death-room. Her eyes could only gloat on the handsome furniture; her mind could only compass the downstairs rooms and the garden and the orchard that was planted with fruit trees in full bearing. Then she cried, and it was bliss to cry. She adored those warm tears that went tumbling down her face.

But Ted was saying with anguish: "I can't bear it. You've cried too much already. Give over, Emily. And let's have a kiss; your first and your last. For I'm

going."

Never had she kissed a man; for why kiss a man who isn't your husband? Yet she did now as Ted asked her; bending with prim frigidity, moving her mouth on his dank brow. And it was then that he died: beneath her mouth.

Timothy had his moods of penitence like the rest of us, and he said to her a night or

two after, being entirely sober:

"You've been a good wife and you've had a hard time. I wouldn't mind swearing that Ted said that to you upon his deathbed. Didn't he, now ?"

"Never mind what Ted said," she smiled

with sorrowful mystery.

"Well, I don't ask you to tell me. Wouldn't be decent. You'd have been better off with Ted, and he was sweet on you. But I got you. And he's gone, poor

chap."

He said this and gave a puffing sigh of scared content. For he was sitting smoking by the fire with his wife at his side. He was alive and warm and clean and strong; and sober—after a good supper. Ted Huggett was out in the cold—somewhere. He had gone and would not come back.

"We shall find, when we hear about the will, that Ted was warm. His cousin Ann'ull take the lot. Providence dursn't trust me with money, Emily; for I'd drink through a fortune. To-night I'm sorry; yet Heaven knows what will happen by dinner-time

to-morrow."

"I know." She was shrill at once.

"Very likely you do, but don't nag me tonight, there's a good girl. I'm sorry. I've said so. I mean to do better. Suppose I promise to give you my money fast as I make it. That do?"

"Wouldn't it do!" Her face gleamed.

"But will you swear it?"

"What a woman you are! I'll swear if

it makes you any happier."

"'Course it makes me happier." She was simple. "For no man's wicked enough to break his oath."

"Ain't he? That's all you know about

men, my girl."

He bent and kissed her. His face was sensible, kind and fond. So that he was her young lover again. And she forgot the man of these later years: sitting, stupid, in the saddler's shop; grown fat—with his white linen apron stretched tightly round his middle. She slid from her chair and fell on her knees beside him. She was fondling his head. She faltered:

"You swear, then? I hold you to

Then she scrambled up and stretched her arms and flung back her head, with the crisp auburn hair. Timothy looked at her intently and he said:

"You was a pretty girl, and you're a fine woman. Not a grey hair---'

"Stop! Don't you finish."

She was harsh, for she felt afraid. upon his death-bed had said much the same thing. And this might be what old folks called an omen. Her brain was busy with ancient superstitions and with tales that she'd been told.

"Stop! Why? Can't a man flatter his

wife?"

"Oh, yes, yes." She sat swiftly down and gripped her hands between her knees.

"Flatter me, love me; and that means keeping sober for my sake."

"I'll give you every penny I make,

Emily."

"Yes, dear. And I'll give you back sixpence a week for pocket-money."

"You will?" He was bitter. "As if I

was a little boy."

"Darling!" She was rapt. "So you

will be—my little boy."

And she thought, sitting there with her sharp chin upturned and her large eves full of heavenly fires, that they would be happy at last. They would be in Ted's beautiful Timothy could come down to the shop every morning; for the landlord must be made to let him keep the shop. The house would let easily enough for a weekend cottage. The world was full of fools: people who loved old places, but only just for fun. They had not lived in an old place for years, as she had. Lived in it and found out the dreadfulness of it. Timothy would walk down the village street every morning and she would watch him from the bow window of her lovely parlour. And she would be busy all the rest of the day: for she meant in that beautiful bit of orchard ground to keep poultry. Also, she might sell fruit and, with this and with that, she would make a little money. Money to buy pretty clothes. She pensively stroked her flimsy checked frock. She looked at her clumsy stockings.

All this was such a sweet dream that she never even thought of Ted lying there in

his coffin to-night.

Then Timothy said to her, sounding sadly

jocular:

"If anybody was to leave me a fortune, I'd drink it. Told you that just now." And he looked at her hard.

"Nobody's left you a fortune." Her voice got shrill: in the ugly way that it did when she felt afraid. Her bright face crumpled

and turned yellow.

"Left me anything, I mean. House property, family silver, or furniture. I'd realise it all. I'd drink it. That's in my blood; to drink the lot."

It was then that she burst out laughing; clapping up her long hands to her head, in a distracted way. Then she brought those hands down until they hid her face. With her face hidden and her fingers pressed against her mouth and nose till she felt ready to choke, she heard Timothy speak again and heard him scroop back his chair and go to the door that shut in the stairs.

"That's a kind thing to do!" He was growling as he went off to bed. "Laugh at a poor devil. Laugh at him!"

She sat alone and broken in the old room that she loathed. She stared at the rafters, she listened to her husband's feet overhead.

All that furniture, which had belonged to his mother and his grandmother, it grouped about her like a company of soldiers or like prison warders. She thought of this. Yes: she was their prisoner. The paraffin lamp burned out as she sat there; her long arms stretched, her hands between her knees. The wick burned red and a stench of paraffin filled the room. Well then, and why not? Wasn't the whole place dirty, dismal, full of smells? Then she thought of the gas-burners in Ted's house and the pretty pink globes.

It came into her heart; thickly distilling like drops of poison: the thing that she must

do to-morrow.

It never occurred to her simplicity—countrywoman that she was and docile wife—it never occurred to her that Ted's house and furniture would be hers to do as she chose with—and nothing to do with Timothy! He was the master, so everything was his. She had given him herself years ago and had naturally given with it everything she had or was likely to have. He had said to her:

"If I had a slice of luck I'd drink it!" And that was enough to convince her.

Next day, she went to Ted's house. The front door was locked and she passed round to the back, which was open. Fruit trees in the orchard were already swelling in a shadowy way with blossom. Maria Helmsley was stooping over the herb bed at the bottom. Emily went through the washhouse, through the kitchen and then into the parlour. She looked carefully at everything, with an air of anguished meditation. And she was obsessed by the confused feeling of something offered, then snatched away.

Maria came in. She was holding a bunch of mint, with short stalks and small curling

"I managed to get enough for sauce. I've cooked a leg of lamb. Mrs. Mace—his cousin Ann—she's coming for the funeral. I reckon she'll take everything: house and furniture and all. There's a lucky woman, if you like!"

"I'm going upstairs," said Emily vaguely, and staring at the big gramophone Ted had

bought only last winter. "I'm going for the last time."

She went up and locked the bedroom door, realising how oddly Maria watched her go. She stood in the middle of the room, surveying all that she saw with profound admiration. She wasn't going to have Ted's beautiful home dragged to pieces; the furniture sold bit by bit, the house sold afterwards for anything it would fetch. How could Ted keep quiet in his grave if this were done? Ted had loved her, he had trusted her, provided for her. So for

Out of her pocket came the chamoisleather bag and out of the bag came the little key. She opened the dressing-table drawer, saw the will, and took it out of the long envelope. There was a lot of jargon which she did not bother about. She saw her own name and that was enough. She put it back into the envelope, then went to the coffin which stood in the middle of the room.

Outside, the cold wind went with a hop, skip and a jump; down below was the peevish clatter of Maria's pots. Trembling very much and scared to death, she yet slipped



"She slid from her chair and fell on her knees beside him."

his sake she must do the thing that she was going to do. This man for whom she had never cared a rush and the other man she would have died for, they should not suffer through her. Living or dead—they should not. Your husband was your lord and master. Drunk or sober, sober or drunk—she loved Timothy. Should he then, through her, be enabled to drink himself to death? He had said:

"If I had a slice of luck I'd drink it!"
And that speech of his showed her the
way. For she was one to act quickly:
never changing her mind, because she did
not allow herself time to change it!

that envelope, with the will inside, under the satin pillow upon which the dead man's head was resting. She looked at him profoundly and with affectionate distaste. He had loved her—but you could not force that funny thing which was Love. Her heart belonged, and always would, to that drunken pig, her husband.

She unlocked the door, got into the passage and sat stupidly upon the top stairs; for her legs were jerking. She felt wicked, yet unlifted. She was not sure about the nature of the thing she had done. She only knew that you could not possibly help doing it. She sat staring at the eight-day clock

in the corner and listening to its peaceful tick. Or she looked through the landing window at fruit trees with their blackish twigs beginning to get fat. Oh, the beautiful grandfather clock! Oh, the beautiful trees! And everything hers if only she went back. If she took from under the little pillow of pure white satin that packet. Such a simple thing to do!

But she presently went steadfastly downstairs and then through the parlour—just once! She touched the polished table and the locked piano. She took ornaments from the mantelshelf, then put them down. Maria, finding her, said:

"That Mrs. Mace is a lucky one, for she'll

step into a splendid home.'

"And what," Emily swung smartly round on her, "do you call a splendid home?"

There was fire in her eyes and strong

"Well, dear, it's everything that your home isn't."

Maria was smoothly insolent: for there was no need now to keep civil to this woman.

THE LITTLE LEAFY LANE.

O-DAY I went a-singing Down the little leafy lane, The morning was so fresh and fair And sweet with last night's rain, The grass was sprigged with blue and pink, And splashed with berry-stain. (My prettiest dress is like the grass: flower-sprigged and berry-stained.) The morning was a-laughing, Like children in their play, The wind shook all the little trees, And wet me with their spray; Then turned and kicked his heels and said: "I must be on my way." (I wonder just how far the wind Can travel in a day.) The lane was all a-flutter Like a bird upon a tree, The lane was like a silver bell That calls me in to tea,

The lane was like my gladdest song
A-singing back at me.
(Surely God loves me much to give
Such lovely things to me.)

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

AUSTRALIAN CRICKET •

NEXT TEST PROSPECTS

By R. W. E. WILMOT

(Mr. Wilmot, of Melbourne, is well-known to Test players, and all keen followers of the game, as one of the leading writers on the subject.)

THE Australian cricket season, lasting from October, 1927, to March, 1928, was full of interest mainly because it was a period of trial, of experiment for the Test series to be played in Australia at the end of the year and in the early months of 1929.

The cry, "Where are the bowlers?" which has troubled cricket enthusiasts all over the world, has been particularly insistent in Australia. As we look back over the years since the first Australian team made a name for itself by beating a strong M.C.C. team-practically an All-England side-in one day at Lord's in 1878, the Commonwealth stands out as the producer of bowling pairs. First F. R. Spofforth and H. F. Boyle, then C. T. B. Turner and J. J. Ferris, followed by Ernest Jones and Hugh Trumble, down to Warwick W. Armstrong and M. A. Noble, E. A. McDonald and J. M. Gregory, the Australians provided a wonderfully strong attack. There were also such men who shone from time to time as George Giffen, T. R. McKibbin, J. V. Saunders, W. P. Howell, Albert Cotter and G. E. Palmer, until in 1926, with McDonald transferred to Lancashire, and J. M. Gregory a shadow of his former self, the Australian attack devolved on two slow bowlers, A. A. Mailey and C. V. Grimmett. It was a weak bowling side which lost the Ashes, two years ago, and as we looked round there did not seem to be any hope of reinforcement. We scanned the horizon for a rising star; we searched high and low without success; and wherever cricketers congregated they asked themselves the question, "Who is to get Hammond and Sutcliffe and Hobbs and the rest out when England visits us in 1928-9?"

We had tried S. C. Everett, a young Sydney fast bowler. We sent him to England, in 1926, full of expectation; but cricket was not the end-all and be-all of his existence, and he had to be consigned to the scrap-heap of unfulfilled bowling hopes.

A. J. Richardson, another of the bowling hopes, had also fallen by the way. He began well in England and for a time seemed likely to make good; but he was not young and to everyone's astonishment he changed his style. Some imp of mischief whispered in his ear that, by discarding the safe road of good length and off spin, he might outrival Root as a leg theory expert, and he listened and fell. From that moment his value to the side deteriorated and we were left without the one length bowler we possessed.

Thus we faced the 1927-8 season last October with practically only one bowler proved in the fire of international cricket, C. V. Grimmett of South Australia. Gregory had lost interest as well as skill; Richardson had dropped out of first-class cricket by going to Western Australia; Arthur Mailey. the wily, had learned no new tricks, and thus, save to new-comers, his art was exposed; Macartney had retired, Hendry and Ryder had lost their ability and were regarded merely as temporary stop-gaps, and there was no one to lead the attack, no one to keep an end going. It is not too much to say that never in the history of Australian cricket was the Test Match prospect so unpromising.

Since then we have gone through a season, and though as we look back we cannot point to any wonderful development, to any new

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find, we certainly are more optimistic, for there are signs that the drift has been

stopped.

So far I have not made reference to the man who is undoubtedly the best bowler in Australia to-day, D. D. J. Blackie. In all the long history of cricket there is not perhaps a man with a more remarkable career. Before the War he was regarded as a very useful bowler, whose ability had not been properly recognised. Wearying of being overlooked, despairing of ever being given the chance for which he pined, he left Melbourne and went to the country, far away in the interior. For five years he did not handle a bat or a ball until, in 1922, he returned to Melbourne. From the first afternoon that he reappeared at the practice nets he picked up his length, his swerve and his general ability as though he were a young Remarkable as it may appear, he was then aged forty years, having been born on April 5th, 1882.

Beginning his cricket career again, when most men have finished it, he at once became the most notable club bowler in Victoria, if not in Australia. Every newspaper critic hailed him as the bowling hope; practically without exception, they clamoured for his inclusion in the Victorian team; but the selectors, blind to his possibilities, deaf to the opinions of the critics, ignored him until by performance after performance he forced himself into the side. His figures with his club, playing against the best batsmen in the State, have been so remarkable that I give them in full.

Season.								Balls.
1922 - 3	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,424
1923-4		•			•			1,886
1924-5	•	•						1,809
1925-6								2,004
1926-7	•		•					2,268
1927-8								1,021
	T	otal	•	•	•	•		10,412

It was not until the season 1924-5 that he appeared in first-class cricket, and since then he has been regarded as the best bowler in Australia. His bowling record since then has been:



[" The Argus," Melbourne.

I. M. GREGORY (NEW SOUTH WALES).

Runs.	Maidens.	Wickets.	Average.
711	19	41	17.34
629	44	51	12.33
532	54	58	10.4
649	42	59	11.
725	53	64	11.32
284	39	14	20.28
			-
3,530	251	287	12.29
	====		

Blackie is a tall man, thin, wiry, untiring, of a most equable temperament. His stamina is wonderful. He seems made of whip-cord; despite his years, the longest

Victoria	v. Queens	sland									Wickets.	Runs.	Average. 18·1
,,,	v. New S		Wales						· ·		31	984	31.74
,,	v. South	Austi	ralia								39	978	25.07
,,	v. West	Austra	ılia		٠,						4	64	16
Rest of	Australia	v. Au	ıstral ia			•					5	104	20.8
	Total	•	•	e	•	•	•	•	•	•	96	2,438	24.44

day is not too long, the hottest day too hot. When the last team to visit England was being chosen he was discarded because he was too old, and yet four years later no Australian team is complete without him. His great asset is his impeccable length. He has long fingers, like Hugh Trumble, whom he resembles in many respects. He does not want the new ball to help his swerve, in fact he prefers not to bowl with it; but with a head-wind, slightly across the wicket, he swings the ball a foot. He "flights" the ball well; and one ball, which seems to float, is particularly dangerous. Like good wine, he seems to improve with age, and this remark applies to his batting. On more than one occasion last season he batted really well-his innings of 55 against South Australia being one of the best in the year. He is by no means a bad fieldsman. Above all he is a trier. I have dwelt at length on the potentialities of Blackie as a Test Match player and, after an experience of more than thirty years, I have no doubt that he is the best bowler produced in Australia since Hugh Trumble. A particularly strong point in his favour is that he does not want a wicket to help him. If the team had to be chosen to-day, he and Grimmett would be the first bowlers chosen. What another year may bring forth, who can say?

For our attack the most important feature is the resurrection of J. M. Gregory, who has demonstrated that he is a force to be reckoned with. If he never bowled another ball his batting and fielding, coupled with his capacity to do the impossible, would ensure his inclusion in the Test team. He is physically fit, is bowling at great pace, and is the same charming personality, the same attractive figure which made him the notable man he was in the A.I.F. team and in Armstrong's victorious eleven of 1921.

The new bowlers are at present on trial and they may be set down as E. L. a'Beckett, a young University student of Victoria; F. L. Morton, a fast bowler, also of Victoria; C. Nicholls, a farmer from the Hawkesbury River, N.S.W., a fast bowler, wonderful slip fieldsman and dashing, hard-driving batsman, who made 110 against Victoria in January; R. McNamee of Sydney, a fastmedium right-hander, who did a sensational bowling performance against Victoria; and R. K. Oxenham, the bowling champion of Queensland, a medium-paced, right-handed batsman and fieldsman. From this quintet much is expected; but, with the exception of Oxenham and Morton, each so far has

proved to be a one-performance man. Of the lot I fancy a'Beckett, who comes of one of the oldest Australian families. He is young, but very keen. He bowls right-hand, fast-medium, and is a good batsman and first-class field. He has the Test Match temperament, is not perturbed by mistakes in the field, of which, by the way, we had plenty last season. Fielding used to be the pride of Australians, but we have fallen very far from the standard set up by the early teams. With Gregory back in form there will be no room for Morton, who is a poor batsman and field and not particularly fast, Nicholls has yet to live up to the first performance he gave, but he is a magnificent fieldsman and a dashing bat. Oxenham, like his fellow-townsman P. M. Hornibrook, the Queensland left-hander, has been wasting his time in the Northern State; but in his trip to New Zealand with the Australian team, to which I refer later, he was thoroughly tried out. He has ability as batsman and bowler and may be a possibility.

As far as Australian batting is concerned,



[" The Argus," Melbourne.

D. D. J. BLACKIE (VICTORIA).



["The Argus," Melbourne.

E. L. A'BECKETT (VICTORIA).

W. H. Ponsford, W. M. Woodfull (Victoria) and A. Kippax (New South Wales) are certainties. On their day J. Ryder and H. L. Hendry are strong aggressive dashers and each is also a useful fast-medium bowler, though in this department and in fielding each is slipping. T. J. E. Andrews is batting better than ever, and as a cover fieldsman is unsurpassed. In this department his nearest rival is a little English boy, J. Scaife, a war orphan, who came to Australia as a lad.

To these have to be added three colts, K. J. Schneider, a diminutive left-hander who made three centuries for South Australia this season, but shortly after his return from New Zealand he was dangerously ill and may not be available, in fact it is doubtful if he will play again for some time; A. Jackson, who made a century in each innings for New South Wales against South Australia; and D. J. Bradman, a young country player who has done remarkably well for New South Wales. Each of these is a class batsman and any one of them may force

his way into the Test team by next season, but there will not be room for more than one. Each is a particularly good fieldsman.

A FORECAST.

It is early yet to attempt to make a forecast of the team for the first Test Match; but it may provide food for discussion to give an indication. I have so far omitted reference to W. A. Oldfield, who is certain to be the wicket-keeper. C. G. Macartney, W. Bardsley, J. M. Taylor and A. J. Richardson have dropped out of first-class cricket, and V. Y. Richardson has not been up to his form of previous years. He has become uncertain. When going, there is no better batsman, and he is a brilliant field, but he will, I think, fall short of Test standard.

It may safely be said that, all going well between now and next December, the certainties are:

W. M. Woodfull (Vic.).

W. H. Ponsford (Vic.).

D. D. J. Blackie (Vic.).

W. A. Oldfield (N.S.W.).

A. Kippax (N.S.W.).

J. M. Gregory (N.S.W.).

C. V. Grimmett (S.A.).

That will provide six batsmen—each capable of making a century—the wicket-keeper, and three bowlers, Gregory (fast), Grimmett (slow), and Blackie (slow medium).

It is essential that there should be a strong cover fieldsman who can also bat, and therefore I add without hesitation:

T. J. E. Andrews (N.S.W.).

Andrews has also the merit of being a change bowler, not perhaps very dangerous, but useful to keep an end going while other bowlers are resting. That brings the list up to eight, and in choosing the other three one must take team work into consideration. As a batsman Ryder is the best dasher in Australia to-day, and he is also a bowler of parts—fast medium—but he is not a good Hendry is very like Ryder in many respects, with batting his strong point, but he has deteriorated as a slip fieldsman, and his bowling nowadays is negligible. for the last three places we must look for bowlers who can bat and field as well. Morton can do neither, McNamee cannot bat and is not a good field, while a'Beckett and Nicholls are both batsmen and fieldsmen. I feel confronted by a difficulty as to how far these two young men may go. They have shown excellent promise, but must do more before they can be chosen in the Test side. If it were the selection of a team of fourteen to visit England, I would have no hesitation in including both, and perhaps at this stage it would be wiser if I were to name fifteen men from whom the team will be selected on form then displayed. Therefore, in extending my list to fourteen, I will add to the eight already named:

J. Ryder (Vic.).

H. L. Hendry (Vic.).

E. L. a'Beckett (Vic.).

C. Nicholls (N.S.W.).

That brings the list up to twelve, and for the last two places I would add three young batsmen and one bowler:

D. J. Bradman (N.S.W.).

A. Jackson (N.S.W.).

R. McNamee (N.S.W.).

With this fifteen as the basis of a Test team Australia will, I think, find satisfactory material for representation. From them an excellent side may be chosen. There will be a blending of youth and experience; a solid team, and one,



["The Argus," Melbourne.

C. NICHOLLS (NEW SOUTH WALES).



[" The Argus," Melbourne.

A. KIPPAX (NEW SOUTH WALES).

I think, distinctly in advance of any that has represented Australia since 1921, when Warwick Armstrong led his team to victory in England.

At the close of the Australian season a team visited New Zealand, and the form to which I have already referred was confirmed.

Unfortunately, the team was picked before a'Beckett and Nicholls had revealed their possibilities, and thus the opportunity for valuable experience was denied them. To Australian cricket the important feature of the tour was the performance of the new men, Jackson, Schneider, Oxenham, McNamee, and a South Australian colt, W. C. Alexander. The last-named gave distinct promise two years ago, but owing to intense study at the Adelaide University he was not able to devote time to practice until this season. He is a brilliant fieldsman and an attractive bat. McNamee and Oxenham both bowled well, and the latter showed himself to be possessed of the right Testmatch temperament by a timely knock of 46 not out in the second Test.

I have so far made no suggestion as to a second wicket-keeper should anything befall W. A. Oldfield. L. O'Connor, the Queensland captain, J. L. Ellis, the Victorian who

was a member of the last team to visit England, and A. Hack of South Australia, would be the candidates, but none of them can compare with Oldfield.

To forecast a team several months before the contests is naturally adventurous, but I trust that readers will take this merely as an expression of opinion, based on careful observation and weighing of possibilities. It will provide cricket enthusiasts with some food for discussion, and will, I hope, lead many to realise that Australia will be well manned at all points and that the grand old English game is still flourishing in the Antipodes.

No cricket article is complete nowadays without figures and averages, and so I give the first-class averages for the season, compiled from the Sheffield Shield games, the matches Victoria v. Tasmania and New South Wales v. New Zealand. They are:

BATTING.

							2
			Innings.	Not out.	Highest.	Total.	Average.
W. H. Ponsford (V.)			8		437	1,217	$152 \cdot 12$
W. M. Woodfull (V.)			7	2	191*	645	129
A. Kippax (N.S.W.)			12	1	315*	926	84.18
H. L. Hendry (V.)			7		168	561	80.14
J. Ryder (V.)			5		106	382	76.4
W. Rowe (Q.)			8	1	147	480	68.5
K. J. Schneider (S.A.)			10		143	520	52
F. C. Thompson (Q.)			10	1	118	442	$49 \cdot 1$
G. W. Harris (S.A.)			11	1	77	485	48.5
J. M. Gregory (N.S.W.)			5		152	231	47.6
L. O'Connor (Q.)			10	1	133*	425	47.2
A. Jackson (N.S.W.)			9		131	464	46.4
T. J. E. Andrews (N.S.V	V.)		11	-	134	509	46.27
D. J. Bradman (N.S.W.)			10	1	134*	416	46.2
C. V. Grimmett (S.A.)			10	3	61*	300	42.86
A. Hack (S.A.) .			8	1	77	283	40.43
E. L. a'Beckett (V.)			4	1	47	120	40
W. A. Oldfield (N.S.W.)			8	2	101 .	198	33
D. D. J. Blackie (V.)			7	2	55	126	$25 \cdot 2$
, ,			4 NT. 4	4			

^{*} Not out.

BOWLING.

									Wickets.	Runs.	Average.
R. K. Oxenham (Q.)									8	156	19.5
D. D. J. Blackie (V.)		•							31	689	$22 \cdot 22$
T. Wall (S.A.)			•						12	286	23.84
J. M. Gregory (N.S.W.)						•		•	12	319	26.63
C. Nicholls (N.S.W.)									12	326	$27 \cdot 16$
C. V. Grimmett (S.A.)		•	•				•		42	1,154	27.48
F. L. Morton (V.) .								:	28	783	27.96
H. Ironmonger (V.)		•	•						25	729	$29 \cdot 16$
J. D. Scott (S.A.) .		•	•					•	21	639	30.43
E. L. a'Beckett (V.)	•	٠.	•	•	•		•		13	393	30.23
R. McNamee (N.S.W.)					. •	•		•	22	761	33.09
A. A. Mailey (N.S.W.)	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	19	975	51.32

Car & Countryside

Things to see when Motoring

Though so much is being done to spoil our lovely countryside there are still innumerable objects and places of interest within easy reach of every great city. The following is the fifth of a series of articles designed to suggest new trains of thought and experience to motorists and others who are willing to forsake the familiar and often monotonous main and arterial roads in favour of the by-ways.

V.—THE FIFTH QUARTER OF THE GLOBE •

By MARY CRANFIELD

(Photographs by the Author and others)

R ICHARD BARHAM, of Ingoldsby fame, the genial parson of Warehorne and Snargate, declared that

"the world, according to the best geographers, is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romnev Marsh"; and there is a queer vein of truth in the fantastic statement.

For the first impression the Marsh country gives is that it is different and apart from anything else that we

may know at home or abroad. The strangeness of which one is conscious is not in the least described by the word "foreign,"

though it is a favourite

one with

ers. Rye is

said sometimes to

be "like

a foreign

town," but

in fact it is not—it is

merely

utterly and

entirely unlike any other town

the visitor

has seen.

So with the country

round —

"The Marsh

that was

old when

kings be-

gan," as its

[F. Frith & Co., Ltd.

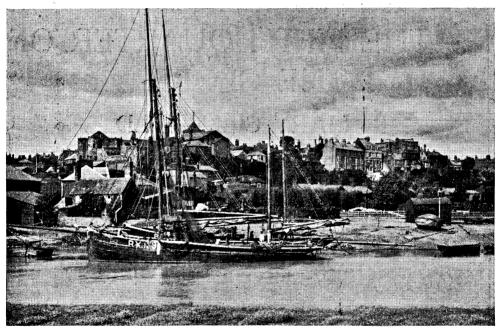
THE LAND GATE, RYE.

own poet calls it—whatever it is, it is not "foreign," any more than it is typically English: it is just Romney Marsh, and the only way to know what that means is to go there.

The ideal way to go is in a car, small enough to twist and turn in narrow, winding lanes, and stout enough not to shirk a few pot-holes. The roads are good—even excellent—in parts, but to be really free of the countryside one does need to leave the main roads and venture on those ignored by the route books and marked dubiously in yellow and white on Ordnance sheets. They will

he is there and would like to pass, no one will see any reason to open the gates.

Probably the secret of the Marsh's odd, aloof charm is the all-pervading influence of the sea. For, however far out of sight, it can never be out of mind if we would understand anything at all about the Marsh and its villages. At every turn the sea meets one. New Romney, the capital of Romney Marsh, was one of the Cinque Ports; Wittersham, now far inland, the capital of the Isle of Oxney (this fifth quarter of the globe keeps its own capitals), once drew more ship-money than Liverpool;



[F. Frith & Co., Ltd.

THE QUAINT OLD TOWN OF RYE.

seldom prove impassable, and when they do there is generally a way round.

Scarcely anywhere else in England does the motorist have things so entirely to himself, for the district is only touched at its edge by railways, if one excepts the "toy" line that runs across it from Hythe to New Romney and is being extended to Lydd. Some of the level-crossings betray how little traffic there is to disturb their peace. Apparently, as the gates happen to be left so they remain, until either a train or a car turns up to necessitate a change over. The patience expected of the motorist elsewhere is out of place here, for until the driver's horn explains loudly that

Smallhythe, the toll bridge and ferry near Tenterden, was once a port on a navigable river, with a flourishing shipbuilding yard from which Tenterden sent to Rye her share in the Cinque Ports' fleet; Tenterden Steeple itself—that too is a sea story which must be told presently.

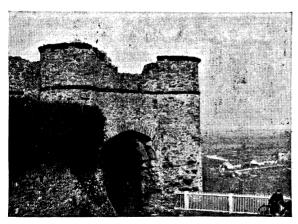
And the sea hereabouts is no friendly and familiar neighbour whose waves beat for centuries against the same cliffs, and whose tides never stray from their accustomed limits. A glimpse of sea and land at high tide by Dymchurch Wall will do more to explain the history of the Marsh than any words. Miles of flat green country intersected by innumerable thin blue lines of

water on one side, and on the other the sea at a level far above a man's head, restrained only for four long miles by the Wall. If once at any point that wall should be allowed to weaken ever so little, it would be a matter of minutes for England to become considerably smaller. It has happened in the past, and the whole story of Winchelsea and Rye and New Romney and many another place is governed by the mysterious coming and going of the sea.

It is surely one of the freaks of history that has made the destruction of Pompeii a household word, while that of Winchelsea, sudden and terrible and complete as it was, is almost forgotten. Yet the English story is scarcely less dramatic than that of the buried Italian cities, and the greatness and importance of Winchelsea is not to be measured by that of the lovely village on the hill that now bears its name.

No one has ever explained the extraordinary changes in the geography of this bit of coast that took place between 1250 and 1287. Never before or since have sea and land changed places on anything like the same scale; nor has a considerable and navigable river suddenly forsaken its bed for some sixteen miles and cut for itself a new course to the sea twelve miles from its former mouth.

Inundations, more or less serious, were no new thing all along that coast, and Winchelsea, like her neighbours, knew to her cost the destructive power of the sea. More than once before the waves had actually swept through her streets. In 1250 some three hundred houses were covered by them, but even then the inhabitants



STRAND GATE, WINCHELSEA.

After the destruction of Old Winchelsea the sea covered the whole of the plain below the hill.



THE NEW GATE, WINCHELSEA,

with a fragment of the old wall which shows by its position that Edward I intended his new town to be much larger than it ever became.

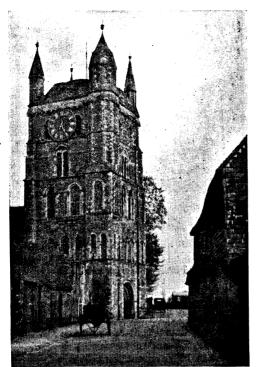
refused to leave their homes, and rebuilt in the same position those that were destroyed. No one believed that one day the sea would come again—and not return.

But in 1287 a great tempest raged, during which, according to many old records, strange lights were seen on the waves and an appearance like red fire ran along the edges of them. Several contemporary witnesses use the same expression in describing what happened: "Twice," they write, "the sea flowed without ebbing," and when the strange storm had subsided the tide spread far inland and no trace of Winchelsea remained.

Yet now once more—more peacefully than it came—the sea is retiring. What

was once a wide bay, stretching from the rock of Rye to the opposite hill of the new Winchelsea, has been for many years a fertile plain. Every year new sandbanks appear and old ones become settled land, and experts are even beginning to talk of the possible reappearance of the old city of Winchelsea from the sea that has now covered it for seven hundred years.

It was Edward I who planned and built the new town which, five years after the destruction of the old, was ready to take over its name and duties and privileges. It was generally the King himself, whoever he happened to be at the time, who came to the rescue when either of the twin towns was in trouble—



THE BEAUTIFUL GREAT CHURCH OF NEW ROMNEY.

A flight of steps leads down to every door, indicating how the level of the land has been raised.

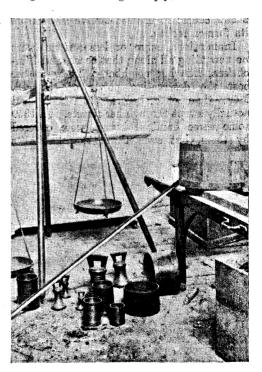
the gates of England were too important to be neglected, though it must be owned that the towns themselves took full advantage of their position. Rye especially was fond of sending out S.O.S. appeals for help, the urgency of which does not seem to have been always justified by the occasion.

Many things in both Rye and Winchelsea are unique, and of these one of the most striking is the actual ground-plan of Edward's new town. Nothing like it exists in England —perhaps hardly in Europe. For it is the only old town ever planned and built as a whole at one time by one master-mind. There are no curves in Winchelsea, no twisting lanes and streets with houses that have found their place merely by force of circumstances. "The city lieth foursquare," with streets, whose lines were marked out with a ruler, cutting across each other at right Only on the road up has Nature been too much for the royal architect's foot-rule. Only a bird could go straight up the face of that hill; mere mortals on wheels must turn and twist and zigzag.

But very few of King Edward's streets and squares remain to-day, and of the three gates which still stand where he built them one, the New Gate, tells a pathetic tale of unfulfilled ambition. Even in her most prosperous days Winchelsea never filled the space surrounded by her massive walls, and now half a mile of country lies between the last house and the New Gate, which stands with a fragment of wall at the bottom of a hill across a narrow, winding lane.

More than once the remoteness of this gate has been Winchelsea's undoing, when the enemy landed farther up the coast and surprised the hill town by this unguarded landward entrance. For the widespread idea that since the Conquest no foreign foe has ever set foot in England receives a rude shock in the ruined church of Winchelsea and in the ancient records of Rye. Rye has long since covered up her wounds, but Winchelsea still shows the scars. Five times the present town has been taken and sacked by the French, and naval battles on which the fate of England depended have been fought within sight of its walls.

On the opposite headland, across what was once the bay, stands Rye, that city of surprises to which no description does justice. A great rock rising steeply, on one side

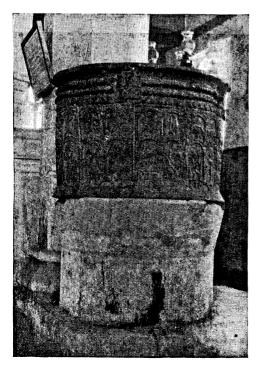


IN BROOKLAND CHURCH.

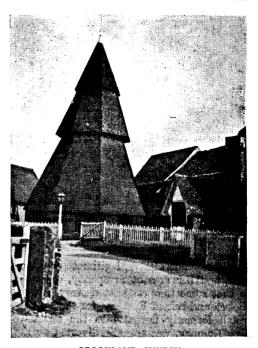
Brass and wood weights and measures used when tithes were paid in kind,

precipitously, out of a dead level plain; old gabled houses, packed tightly together and climbing up to the church, whose squat tower with its low, red-tiled cap forms the apex of a pyramid in which every upward line finds its crown and its completion—such is Rye. Probably there is no corner of the place that has not been the joy and the despair of innumerable artists; but to know its utmost beauty, go out towards the sea, as every wise and ambitious artist does, and watch the silhouette of the town darken against the flaming sky of a Marsh sunset. Nowhere except in the Marsh does the sun set in such splendour, and nowhere but at Rye will you get a whole town lifted high against it for your delight.

It is a bewildering little town; most of the steep, cobbled streets lead to the church, but the High Street, after a short course across and round the hill, ends abruptly in an iron railing which guards a precipice. Close by stands the old Ypres Tower, planned as a last refuge for Rye's defenders when town and walls were lost. It was in the Great War that most people first heard of "Wipers," but Rye knew that rendering of the name centuries before. Built by William de Ypres in the time of Stephen,



THE RARE NORMAN LEAD FONT IN BROOKLAND CHURCH.



BROOKLAND CHURCH.

The detached timber tower or spire or steeple.

the tower has been known locally as Wipers ever since.

Rve has had a turbulent and eventful life: she has fought many times for England and as often for herself, and when there was nothing else to fight about the inhabitants managed to relieve the threatened monotony of life by fierce struggles over their own local government and the election of Mayor and Councillors. During the stagnation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when dulness and peace were broken only by one or two famous murders, there was always the chief occupation of the Marsh country to take a hand in, and there were probably few men of Rye who were not fairly closely concerned in the doings of "the Gentlemen."

In both Rye and Winchelsea Wesley preached again and again, and the people heard him gladly just so long as he inveighed against other sins than smuggling. On that point all his eloquence was wasted, and when he preached his last open-air sermon under the old ash by Winchelsea church, which was blown down last year, the two towns were as far as ever from the least intention of giving up "the accursed thing" in the preacher's language, or "the Fair Trade" in their own.



ANCIENT OAK TRACERY IN THE PORCH OF HIGH HALDEN CHURCH.

All the trade of Rye, legitimate or otherwise, and her present prosperity, she owes to that same tempest that destroyed Winchelsea and ruined Romney, for the Rother, which formerly flowed into the sea near New Romney, was actually diverted by the altered level of the land and forced to find for itself a new channel beneath the rock of Rye.

The strange story can be read to-day in the flight of steps which leads down to every door of the beautiful great church of New Romney, and in the green stain reaching half-way up the pillars of its nave. Romney suffered the very opposite fate to that of Winchelsea in the great upheaval, for when the terrified inhabitants ventured back they found their homes buried, not by sea, but by the land, whose level had been raised to where it stands to-day.

Judging by the permanence of the stain, it was long before they took up the task of clearing the church from the silt and refuse with which the sea had filled it. Romney's greatness was ended: her own river and the sea had played her false, and one of the proudest of the Cinque Ports was left to dream away the rest of her long life as a little inland village, with only one splendid church remaining of the five she once possessed.

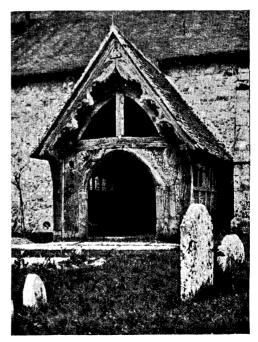
Far up, near Appledore, in the old channel of the Rother, a Danish ship of war was dug up some years ago—ships have a way in this country of turning up in unexpected places, another having been found in a field near Newenden, far inland in the "den" district, where Rolvenden, Biddenden, Bethersden, Tenterden and many other names still show where lay the deep wooded

valleys, the swine pastures of the South Saxons.

Even here the sea pursues us. It was to Tenterden that Sir Thomas More came to hold inquiry into the blocking of Sandwich Harbour by the Goodwin Sands. Being somewhat at a loss where to begin his investigation, he called a meeting of the townspeople, and, singling out oldest inhabitant he could see, asked him what he knew about the sand-bars. Greatly pleased at the compliment, the old man agreed that if anyone knew he ought to, "being well nigh a hundred years old, and no man here in this company anything neare unto mine

age." In the Ancient's opinion, delivered at great length and with many repetitions, Tenterden Steeple was the cause of the Goodwin Sands: "For I might remember when there was no steeple at all here; and I might remember when there were no sands there, and before Tenterden Steeple was in building there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the harbour."

There may have been more reason than appears behind this accusation, for the



HIGH HALDEN CHURCH PORCH WAS BUILT ABOUT THE TIME OF KING JOHN.

church belonged to St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury, and the story goes that the Abbot misappropriated stone and money intended for strengthening the sea wall beyond the Goodwins, then a part of the mainland, and with it built Tenterden Steeple, leaving the sea and the wall to settle things between them, with the result that the land was submerged.

Tenterden itself once enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the Cinque Ports. It happened in this way. There came a time when the five Ports found themselves paying more heavily than they found convenient for their proud position, and they petitioned the King to be allowed to share their honours with certain other towns, on condition that these on their part shared the cost of providing their quota of ships and men for the King's service. In this way Tenterden was allotted as a "limb" to Rye, and the link between the two towns has never been wholly broken.

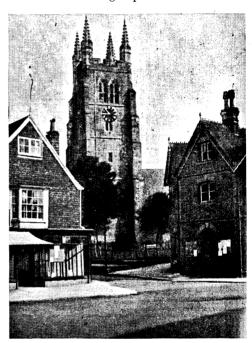
Lydd, near the coast, which gave its name to the well-known explosive lyddite, was Romney's "limb" in the days when Romney was great and prosperous and lorded it over her neighbours. Lydd's chief interest to-day lies in her enormous church—the cathedral of the Marsh—of which the upper part of the tower was built by Cardinal Wolsey when he was vicar of the parish. Even in Romney Marsh, where nearly every church has one or two old brasses to delight the collector, Lydd, which contains no fewer than seventeen, offers a rare haul.

Nearly everywhere in the Marsh a visit to the church will prove well worth while, whatever one's particular interest may be. The most startling of all is Brookland, with its detached timber tower, or spire, or steeple (no recognised name suits what is absolutely unique), for the strangeness of which neither history nor legend accounts satisfactorily. The church was built in the thirteenth century by the monks of Canterbury, and here, as at Tenterden, there seems to have been some difficulty about the tower. The story told on the spot is that when the church was finished there was no stone left for a steeple, so timber dug out of the Marsh was used instead and put together with wooden pins. The result is strange indeed, and emphatically not beautiful. The queer octagonal erection stands on the ground beside the church, which it completely dwarfs with its unwieldy black mass.

Inside the church there is much of interest.

The old high, square pews remain, and behind them is one of the rare Norman lead fonts, decorated with the signs of the Zodiac. In a screened-off corner where wood is chopped, and where many miscellaneous articles appear to have found a home, is a fine collection of old brass and wood weights and measures used when tithes of corn and wine were paid in kind.

Not far from Brookland stands another very different tower. Ivychurch, enormous and massive, rises from among some half-dozen houses which appear to form its parish. The church, vast and empty, stands desolate now, with a pathetic little island of chairs grouped round a stove.



TENTERDEN STEEPLE,
said by old tradition to have been the cause of the
Goodwin Sands.

The task of keeping the great church in repair must be hopelessly beyond local means, but it would be a grievous loss if those splendid arches and rugged, fortress-like walls ever fell into ruin.

One more church must be mentioned, for here too the visitor will see something the like of which for age and beauty he will not easily find elsewhere. Of High Halden, some three miles north of Tenterden, most guide-books mention in passing that the church has a timber tower. If the historical notes hung up in the church itself are to be

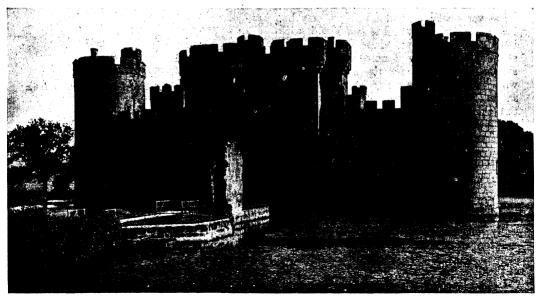


BODIAM CASTLE.

trusted, this same tower dates from the early thirteenth century, and the beautiful south porch, built entirely of oak, is very nearly as old. Think of it! We are used to reckoning the age of stone by many centuries; but wood—wood shaped and carved when John or Henry III was on the throne, exposed to the weather ever since, and remaining to-day—silver-grey with age, but as sound and strong as when it was first cut!

While we are on the Weald side of Ten-

terden there is one expedition that must not be missed. The round towers of Bodiam Castle have curiously little history—what there is of it can be read in any guide book—but, once there, one is content to forget all about history and to revel simply in the beauty of the massive grey stone castle rising out of the water which laps against its walls. If we are fortunate enough to be there when the water-lilies in the moat are in flower, the sight will not be soon forgotten.



[Valentine & Sons, Ltd.



"She was puzzling over a move when Mr. Carte Postale, in pyjamas and a red flannel blazer, shot into the corridor."

THE TRAVEL TEST

- By CHARLES BRACKETT

R. ALBERT SHAW and the brown lady with the little brown girl had sat opposite each other for some time and adjusted themselves to each other's presence.

Albert Shaw always arrived at French trains in ample time. If he came before the compartment was filled he had found he was able to arrange his belongings more comfortably. Mr. Shaw liked comfort. He didn't like it to the extravagant extent of taking a train bleu, or even a lit salon, but if one keeps an eye open at the outset of a journey one can have a good deal of comfort in a couchette, granted that one's three neighbours are supportable.

The brown lady without the little girl would have ranked very high as a neighbour, perhaps eight in a scale of ten. True, she

was French, and the French are high-strung travellers, but she was apparently undertaking this journey, which would last perhaps eighteen hours, with more calm than one had any right to expect of a Frenchwoman. Moreover she was clean, she would not talk, one could probably come to some adjustment. with her on the subject of ventilation. With a child sharing her narrow bed her rating, of course, fell lamentably. Children can do ghoulish things on the train at night. They can ask for drinks of water at lost hours. They can sob, and even-horrid thoughtbe sick. Albert Shaw had heard of such occurrences—they could not fail to be unpleasant.

Together the brown lady and the little girl might merit perhaps four. Albert Shaw put it so high because of his appreciation

of the brown lady's character as written in her face; her long, judicious upper lip, her cold eye. The brown lady, he felt blessedly sure, would tolerate no nonsense.

Albert Shaw, as was his custom to amuse himself when travelling, searched about for a name with which to ticket the brown lady, and fastened on Madame Fishy LeBrun, which seemed to cover her more salient physical characteristics, and even to indicate her maternity.

Albert particularly hoped the journey before him would be a pleasant one, because he was anxious to arrive in Cannes fresh. Although not in the least a romantic person, he had a romantic project afoot. In Cannes he intended to become engaged to a Miss Polly Boone. This was more romantic—or less so—because he had never met Polly Boone. He had merely heard about her for years, and everything he had heard suited his neat, fastidious mind.

She was three years younger than he. She was not a beauty but extremely attractive-looking, she had a small income of her own on which she lived intelligently and gracefully, and the people he liked best adored her.

Just recently Albert Shaw had realised that if he was to marry at all he must marry soon. He was thirty-five and his character wasn't as pliable as it had been. He could feel himself crystallising into a chronic bachelor, and bachelorhood, he had observed, while it was the pleasantest estate in the world up to a certain point, after that became pretty dreary except for the debauched. Mr. Shaw had neither the income nor the temperament to be debauched.

Harry and Joan Pryor's invitation to come to Cannes, where Polly Boone was to spend a month with them, had seemed an indication from Dating

indication from Destiny.

As he waited for the train to leave the Gare de Lyon, Albert Shaw was not thinking of his lyric project, however. He was wondering impatiently who else would come to complete his little four-bed world for the night. There was drama in the two upper places yet to be filled, inevitably to be filled, since travel to the Riviera was heavy that month. Madame Fishy LeBrun's expression indicated that she too felt it, that she too was dreaming of courteous, self-effacing mutes whose very presence would expand the compartment to quiet spaciousness.

Then invasion descended.

There were four in the party, a pale and handsome gentleman, a dark and beautiful

lady, a bespectacled child in checked shorts, and a French bulldog.

The adults entered with an air of unspeakable strain.

"Mets toi la," they cried to the little boy.
"Sit there. Don't budge."

"Mets toi la," they cried to the dog.

They gasped while they thrust luggage into racks.

"C'est à vous, monsieur?" the gentleman demanded of Albert Shaw about a large suitcase which was occupying a strategic position. "This is yours?"

"What?" Albert Shaw asked, in a half-witted voice he had cultivated for such occasions. It often added to one's comfort to pretend to understand no French, and Albert was ruthless about employing such methods.

The gentleman groaned, and did not endeavour to dispute the position. With the luggage disposed of, he and the lady sank into seats, looked at each other and gasped some more.

Albert Shaw was at the nadir of despair. Of course, all four of the new-comers couldn't be going to occupy the two upper berths, but the presence of any fraction of the party sent the average of the compartment down among the minuses. Nerves, a child, and an animal! What additional disadvantages could they have had?

Nevertheless, the lady and gentleman were a decorative pair. In fact, about their joint soft beauty there was something almost ridiculous. They reminded Albert Shaw of the ladies and gentlemen in very refined French post-cards, the faintly tinted post-cards representing amour at its most delicate, depicting the scarcely tactile caress of cheek to cheek, the lover poised behind the rustic bench where lolled the ineffably beloved.

"Monsieur et Madame Carte Postale" Albert Shaw christened them, though he felt that for them to have produced a leggy boy in checked shorts was distinctly out of character.

The train started.

Monsieur Carte Postale had regained his breath.

"I will see the contrôleur," he said to Madame Carte Postale, and dashed from the compartment. Madame Carte Postale leaned her head against the filet P.L.M. and pressed a hand to her brow. One could see that it had all been too much for her.

Madame Fishy LeBrun had been studying the arrivals too, but she was a woman who

could rise above misfortune.

"Vois qu'il est mignon!" she remarked to her little girl about the dog. "See how cunning he is!"

The little boy started to take off his coat. "Don't budge," Madame Carte Postale

cried at him again.

Albert Shaw closed the book he had opened, with a gesture of resignation. He would have to suspend his mental processes entirely until the Carte Postales had settled down, as much as they ever would settle down.

Monsieur Carte Postale came back with an expression Hiawatha might have had when he dragged, exhausted and unsuccess-

ful, back to Minnehaha's lodge. "Nothing," he pronounced.

"Nothing?" It apparently had not occurred to Madame Carte Postale that life could be so cruel. She shut her eyes for a second, then, as though a wicked thought had been born to her, she opened them and turned them, just slightly, toward Madame Fishy LeBrun.

Monsieur Carte Postale understood.

"Madame," he began, lipping the word exquisitely, and his voice was subtly, wheedlingly wicked, "I implore your pardon, but——"

He, too, put a hand to his forehead. The sweat of anguish stood on it. Then he went on.

Madame could see that they were three (he discounted the dog) and they had been unable to get three berths in one compartment. He had just tried again with the contrôleur and failed. The little boy was too large to share a berth, and it would be necessary that he sleep apart from them. Madame knew children. Was it thinkable that Madame would exchange her couchette for the one reserved for the little boy?

"Is it a lower?" Madame Fishy LeBrun

asked.

"Oh, certainly one must not ask Madame to exchange her lower for an upper,"

Madame Carte Postale agreed.

"But yes, it is a lower. It is in every respect the equal of the one Madame is occupying."

"Very well," Madame consented.

One child out of the way, at least, thought Albert Shaw.

With innumerable "Je vous en prie, Madame's," Monsieur Carte Postale collected the Fishy LeBrun luggage.

"Ah, that's gentille of you," Madame Carte Postale breathed innumerable times. The laden procession left. "It's very gentille of that lady," Madame Carte Postale observed to the little boy.

"It is indeed, maman," the little boy agreed. Then he began exciting his dog to bounds and growls with his caresses. "Oh, how cunning he is, my Loulou!"

"Don't do that," his mother adjured him

brokenly.

In the silence which followed Albert Shaw could have read again had his mind been at rest, but the dog troubled him. The dog would sleep on the floor, undoubtedly. He seemed an affectionate animal. It was quite possible that, mistaking Albert Shaw for his master, he might bound up in the night and begin turning three times on his stomach, or licking his face.

Albert Shaw didn't like the idea, and as though in payment, with interest, for his having borrowed trouble, there came the rumble of misfortune from the corridor.

Madame Fishy LeBrun, her little girl, and Monsieur Carte Postale, a cloud of anguish almost obscuring his pale and handsome face, were all back.

The reservation had been for an upper.

Madame Carte Postale cried "Non and Non!" at the awful information.

"Naturally one couldn't ask Madame to

accept an upper for her lower."

Madame Carte Postale stole a glance at the calm face with which Madame Fishy LeBrun was superintending the replacement of her luggage.

"But no, certainly not," she sighed.

"He will not sleep to-night. That is all."
That was all. The Carte Postales met
the fact with Knut Hamsun faces and
Eleonora Duse hands.

"Oh, tout de même," Madame Fishy Le-Brun said philosophically. After all, it wasn't her child who wasn't going to sleep.

Then help came, miraculously, unexpectedly.

Mr. Albert Shaw, the American, from whom they had expected nothing, not even comprehension, entered the drama.

"Perhaps the little boy will take my

place."

It was beyond belief.

"But, Monsieur, the place we have for

him is an upper."

What to Albert Shaw was mere altitude compared to separation from a little girl and a dog?

"That makes no difference."

So extravagant was the sensation that even Madame Fishy LeBrun joined the applause.

"But how gentil of monsieur!"
Gentil! Gentil!

It like for the form of the for

It all had its effect.

Monsieur Carte Postale tricd to help Mr. Shaw with his luggage, as he had helped Madame Fishy LeBrun, but Mr. Albert Shaw, by this time intoxicated with his own gentilesse, struggled for every piece.

Monsieur Carte Postale would take Mr. Shaw's papers then, and his book. Oh, yes!

That! He insisted.

He peered into his new abode with positive dread, but one glance reassured him as to the desirability of his superb sacrifice. There sat within an elderly couple in black, and a lady reading a book through tortoiseshell spectacles, a lady every detail of whose appearance eliminated her from the limbo of the possibly objectionable.



What raging bronchitis? What pets?
But Albert Shaw had burned his bridges.
He had begun his gesture and he must carry it through, much as he envied the wisdom of the less applauded Madame Fishy LeBrun, who looked before she slept.

Monsieur Carte Postale pressed Mr. Shaw's hand. He could not express. It was so rare to find a person so gentil! So sympathique! Especially a foreigner. Certainly the little boy would not have closed an eye.



"Oh, don't speak of it," Albert Shaw begged him, looking self-deprecatory. "It's nothing."

"But yes, it is a great deal!"

The elderly French couple, too, had been concerned about the threatened tragedy under the layers of rich fat with which thousands and thousands of superb French meals had overlaid them.

"Yes, it was very gentil of Monsieur," they affirmed.

"And Monsieur had a lower." "Oh, gentil! Gentil! Gentil!"

The third occupant of the carriage had

removed her tortoiseshell spectacles and she sat watching the little scene with a mouth pursed into the drollest of repressed smiles.

"Was it not gentil of Monsieur!" The

elderly Frenchwoman politely included her in the fête in honour of Mr. Shaw.

"Very gentil indeed," she agreed in French, "and so cadgey!" she added in

English.

For an instant the remark distinctly displeased Albert Shaw, who had begun to accept his own gentilesse as a rather fine thing. He cast the lady an almost indignant glance, but it arrived considerably modified. She looked so charming as she sat observing them. Her wide eyes gazed from under an intelligent brow, her mouth was humorous, her nose all a nose could ask to be. wore a sage-green suit, with primroses in her buttonhole, and a sage-green hat. Everything about her struck Albert Shaw as being right. She had exquisite hands, and delightful, long beige-clad feet.

"Wasn't it?" he replied to her remark,

also in English.

"That compartment," she commented, "must be hell itself. I think this is going to be all right, although," she glanced at the elderly couple, "they have given some signs of premature sleepiness. Before the commotion about the little boy began they had spread newspapers over their heads. was like riding with victims of the guillotine."

Monsieur Carte Postale left; Albert Shaw began arranging his belongings.

"Is this yours?" he asked the American lady, of a suit-case.

"No, it's theirs."

"Do you suppose they'd mind if I moved it? I like to have my things together."

"They'd howl like scalded wild-cats. you might ask them if it wouldn't be more convenient for them at the end."

"Are you sure they don't understand English?" Albert rebuked her slightly.

Absolutely. I tested them when I first came." Then she dropped into excellent French: "Monsieur thinks it would perhaps be a little more convenient for you, Madame, if your portemanteau were at the end, so that it wouldn't become confused with his luggage."

'Just so. Just so," the Frenchwoman

agreed.

"Thanks," Albert Shaw said, as he sat

"You're welcome," the green lady smiled at him, then she opened her spectacles.

"Don't be afraid that I'm one of those people that talk," she remarked, and, putting them on, she turned the pages of her book to her place.

"I wish you would," Albert Shaw told

She looked at him in a way which gave an amusing effect of peering over her spectacles.

"This journey," she reminded him, "is

eighteen hours long."

Continuing his game, Albert Shaw found himself rather stumped for a name for her. She seemed almost above the familiarity of a tag. She was like something fragrant, and pleasant, and yet not sweet. He had it. She was like mint.

Miss Mint he called her.

Of course there might be an error in that. She might be Mrs. Mint. Still, she wore no wedding-ring, and she was the sort of woman who would wear her wedding-ring.

Miss Mint had named the elderly couple. They were Monsieur and Madame Guillotine.

Shortly the Guillotines spread newspapers over their heavy faces again; and Madame Guillotine sat, a strange, headless body fanning itself with a small, black satin fan. The initial jangle of the bell for first service in the wagon-restaurant galvanised them into life, however. Down were their newspapers in an instant and off they puffed.

Miss Mint looked up from her book.

"I did wish they'd both try to get through the door together and be stuck, " she said. "Wouldn't it have been fun ?"

She didn't wait for an answer but resumed her reading.

It was unnecessary for Albert Shaw to ask whether Miss Mint was going to the second service. Of course she was, and of course she had obtained tickets for it before she got on the train, just as he had.

Miss Mint read until the bell for the second service sounded, then she took a small towel and soap from her suit-case, which was of dark green leather but pro-

tected with a canvas cover.

Albert Shaw took soap and a towel from his, and they approved each other at the expense of French trains.

"Those filthy roller towels!"

"That waxy grit they call soap!"

When Albert Shaw came back to the compartment Miss Mint had opened on her lap a small travelling case filled with enamelled bottles. She was applying some liquid from one to her face with a small morsel of cotton.

"It's mint alcohol," she said. "I find it very refreshing. Won't you try some?"

"Thank you," he answered, amused because of the name he had given her.

It was delightful stuff.

"Will you dine with me?" he asked Miss Mint.

"I will sit at your table, if I may," she replied.

The Guillotines staggered back, stuffed just a little more than they had been.

"I'm afraid the poor dears are going to want to go officially to sleep very soon," Miss Mint sighed as she wended the uneven

path to the wagon-restaurant.

"Why should somnolence come down on the French like a snuffer the minute they get on a train?" Albert Shaw questioned, as they sat down at the table assigned them. "They can't all go to sleep at nine o'clock when they're at home."

"It's exhaustion due to nervous excitement at the idea of travelling. They hate it. The Frenchman and his foyer, you know. And yet travel can be so pleasant, if one leave and the state of the state of

if one keeps one's head about it."

"Can't it?" Albert Shaw agreed.

"I appreciate it because I've been cut off

from travelling recently."

At the thought of whatever had cut her off from travel Miss Mint's face grew something more than wistful for a moment, then she changed the subject.

"What puzzles me," she said, "is that family you exchanged your berth with."

"The Carte Postale family?"
"Why the Carte Postales?"
Albert Shaw explained.

"That's very amusing," Miss Mint commented. "What I can't understand is why Monsieur Carte Postale couldn't have taken the little boy's berth and left the little boy with his mother."

"That solution never occurred to me," Albert Shaw admitted. "Perhaps the little boy isn't his child and he doesn't like to be

put out by him."

"No, there was paternal solicitude in that anguish before the change was made. It's a mystery, and we must solve it. I'm tremendously curious about people. Are you?"

"It's my passion, but I don't see how we

can get to the bottom of this."

"You might ask for your place back,

making my suggestion."

"Nothing on earth would make me give up my present location. Besides, I distrust Madame Fishy LeBrun's little girl's digestion."

"I adore the name Madame Fishy Le-Brun. Do you name every one on a train?"

" Yes."

"And what is my name?"

He smiled at her.

"Miss Mint."

. "Because of my alcohol?"

"I named you before that. For a lot of reasons."

Miss Mint considered the appellation.

"It sounds a little old-maidish," she said, but I like it. I am old-maidish."

Albert Shaw interrupted the conversation for an instant.

"Better wipe that plate off with your napkin," he suggested. "It doesn't look quite clean."

Miss Mint smiled as she did so.

"You believe in French customs, I see."

"Neat ones. I suppose I'd better tell you my name before you make up one for me."

"I've named you already. Out of Kate Greenaway."

" What?"

"I think I won't tell you until to-morrow."

"Maybe you'll let it slip."

"No, for to-night I'll just call you by your title, your Highness."

As Albert Shaw didn't remember a line of Kate Greenaway's verse, the clue gave him no help, but he didn't nag for an explanation.

They had an extraordinarily pleasant dinner, with a bottle of St. Julien which

Miss Mint allowed him to buy.

When they returned to their compartment it was proven that Miss Mint's words about the Guillotines had been prophetic. Already the couchettes were made up, and the Guillotines were two black mounds on the two lower shelves, their faces nuzzled piteously into their pillows.

"Have we got to go to bed?" Miss Mint

asked of Albert Shaw.

"There's always the corridor. You could sit on the *strapontin*, and I have a suit-case I could use for a seat."

"Do you happen to play chess?"

"I do, love to."

"Then wait a minute."

From her suit-case Miss Mint produced a tiny leather box, which unfolded into a chess-board with flat tabs to thrust into slits in the squares instead of carved men, which would have rolled away.

They were very merry over the precariousness of their seats and their game.

Miss Mint played chess just as Albert Shaw would have chosen that she should play it, well enough to keep him alert, and not so professionally as to make him feel stupid.

She was puzzling over a move when the door of the compartment in which Albert

Shaw's first couchette had been located snapped back, and Mr. Carte Postale, in pyjamas and a red flannel blazer, shot into the corridor.

"Good!" Miss Mint exclaimed. "Now

you can ask him."

But Mr. Carte Postale appeared to be in dangerous humour. He flung the door of the compartment shut, went to the far end of the corridor, and lit a cigarette with rageshaken hands.

"C'est impossible!" he said audibly, and enough of the steam of his anger seemed to escape in the ejaculation to enable him to continue life without bursting. "It's impossible!"

"What do you suppose is impossible?" Miss Mint queried, changing the position of

a pawn on the board.

"Probably Madame Fishy LeBrun wants a little air."

(110010 all.

"Why don't you go and find out?"

"I haven't the nerve."

"Oh, go on."

Albert Shaw was as curious as anyone alive, and he liked Miss Mint all the better for her amused interest. He rose and walked down to Monsieur Carte Postale.

"Is there anything I can do?" he asked. But neither Albert Shaw nor Miss Mint was ever to know exactly what had proven so impossible. Some horror had taken place in the little room with its four shelves for bodies like a mausoleum, some horror of which Monsieur Carte Postale could not bring himself to speak.

He wrung Albert Shaw's hand as though it had been offered him in consolation for a

bereavement.

"You are too *gentil*!" he breathed grateully.

"Is it the lady with the little girl?"
Monsieur Carte Postale had regained
possession of himself.

"Oh, no. It is a question of blankets."
At least, Albert Shaw thought, he could carry back to Miss Mint the other information she desired.

"I find myself so comfortably installed in this extra place of yours," he said, "and you are so crowded in the old one. I wonder you didn't leave the boy with Madame and take it yourself."

An, expression beyond horror twisted the pale and handsome face of Monsieur Carte Postale.

"Ah, that! Never. My wife and I are never separated. Never!"

As he spoke once more the door of the

compartment was thrust open and Madame Carte Postale appeared in it.

"Emil!" In the one vibrant word was the command that he come back and take up some domestic battle where he had left it.

A cross-fire of words took place, so rapid that Albert Shaw could recognise nothing but their savagery, their exhausted, end-of-the-rope viciousness. Then Madame Carte Postale snapped shut the door again.

Again Monsieur Carte Postale was quivering with rage, and in deference to him Albert Shaw stopped breathing, became as invisible as one standing beside a person in the corridor of a P.L.M. train can well become. For a second time, with a supreme effort, Monsieur Carte Postale put together his pale and handsome face.

"Bon soir, monsieur," he shook Albert's hand very formally, "and again thank you."

He backed away, bowing. There was a suggestion of *gentil* and *sympathique* in the air. Then, reaching his door, he slammed it open, charged in, and shut it violently after him.

"What an awful row!" Miss Mint said.

"Did you find the cause of it?"

"Only that it was something about blankets. But I did find why he couldn't give up his *couchette*. He's too devoted to his wife to be separated from her."

"How appalling!" Miss Mint commented.
"I've discovered how I can beat you, by

the way."

She proceeded to demonstrate the method. "Now I'm getting sleepy," she said, "and don't think I'll play any more. I'm awfully grateful for your inquiries into the domestic life of the Carte Postales. Heavens! What a terrible thing one of those passionate unions can be!"

"It's not my ideal of a marriage," Albert

Shaw said.

"Congreve defined mine," Miss Mint told · him, "in The Way of the World. Do you remember Millamant's speech to her suitor? 'Don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fadler and Sir Fadler, nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen there again. As if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well bred. Let us be strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well bred as if we were not married at all."

It was Mr. Albert Shaw's favourite speech in all dramatic literature, and it was extraordinarily pleasant to him to hear Miss Mint deliver it in her crisp, amused voice.

"Do you know the rest of the Condi-

tions?" he asked.

"Every one," she answered, "and subscribe to them all."

"Recite them."

"It's too late. Give me a few minutes to climb up to my berth and compose myself for the night before you come in. And sleep well"

It was quite a time before Mr. Albert Shaw was able to sleep at all, in such a state of phosphorescence was his brain. He was not a very imaginative man, and somehow he had never set his standards of charm and companionability in a woman at an angle which could possibly comprehend Miss Mint. Was it believable that the legendary Polly Boone could surpass her? Then a thought burst upon Albert Shaw like a conviction. Why wasn't it the likeliest thing on earth that Miss Mint was Polly Boone? From the Pryors' letters he couldn't be sure that Polly Boone was actually in Cannes. might be on the way, and while Miss Mint stretched the specifications he had been given, surely she filled them too perfectly for mere chance.

Well, the morning would tell, and he would go to sleep. Perhaps he would dream of Miss Mint. It was only on that hope that he could bring himself to relinquish his delightful thoughts.

He woke early. The train had jolted to a stop. It must be Avignon, where one could buy a pleasant breakfast on the

quai.

Albert Shaw lowered himself from his berth, smoothed his hair, put on his coat, and was opening the door of the compartment quietly when he heard the light snapping of fingers and looked up.

Miss Mint was beckoning him.

"I'm awake too," she whispered. "Help me down."

She had pulled on her hat, and looked incredibly fresh.

The early sunlight fell in level rays on the

platform.

"I've found the chocolate here much better than the coffee, in the past," Miss Mint said.

They each drank a cup of chocolate and nibbled a croissant.

"It's too early for papers, isn't it?"

"I never read papers, anyway," Albert

"Of course I have to, with my terrible curiosity about everything."

"But one gets so much more essential

truth from a good book."

"Still, one gleans a fact or two from the daily prints," Miss Mint said with a smile; then, changing the subject, "We must buy quantities of Evian to wash it. You know you can't rely on the train supply. And I think I'll buy croissants and peaches for the poor old Guillotines."

"I doubt if they'll wake long enough to

eat them."

"I imagine hunger wakens them periodically, and hunger alone. And I insist on paying for my offerings to them. I want to be gentille too."

"Did you sleep well?"

"As one sleeps in a couchette, and you're not to try and carry those four bottles. I can take one in each hand as well as not."

They waited in the corridor for the Guillotines to appear, and while they waited they laughed in a kind of gay exhaustion at the frantic little villas the train passed, orange and pink, betowered and befrescoed edifices called La Turquoise, and Villa Bobby, and Le Palace Froufrou.

"Yet what would you name it if you

owned one?" Albert Shaw asked.

"Villa à Vendre, I think," Miss Mint replied, quoting the For Sale signs, and it was a tremendous joke.

It was a long time before Albert Shaw got round to the question he'd meant should be the first thing he would ask her.

"How far are you going?"
To Cannes. And you?"

"Cannes too."

He almost went on to inquire if she was going to visit the Pryors' there, but before he had quite made up his mind to, Monsieur Guillotine opened the door of the compartment and thrust out a sleep-puckered face.

"Bon jour, monsieur," Miss Mint greeted him. "We got some breakfast for you."

"Tiens! Regardez donc, Antoinette, ce qu'on nous apporte!"

"Oh, that's very gentil!" Madame Guillo-

tine said.

They ate like children, and when they had finished Monsieur Guillotine said: "There is a wagon-restaurant put on at Marseilles

is a wagon-restaurant put on at Marseilles where we can really break our fast."

Then they put the newspapers over their

heads and drowsed a little more.

Miss Mint got down her book.

"But I want to talk to you," Albert Shaw protested.

"No, you don't. You'd wish I were dead in half an hour. Read your book. If it's any good, it was written with an unexhausted mind."

Albert Shaw obeyed to the extent of opening the volume of Horace Walpole's letters, his perusal of which he had so hated to have disturbed the day before, but he sat looking over it at Miss Mint and taking profound pleasure in what he saw. The line of her chin was exquisite, the gesture with which she turned her pages was lovely, a charming smile hovered about her lips occasionally, and she wore her tortoiseshell reading spectacles with a difference, as though she knew that they didn't disfigure her, but merely underlined her piquant good sense.

His eyes strayed to the dressing-case beside her. It was initialled M.B. Polly Boone must be Mary Boone, of course. It confirmed his theory, but he didn't much care about confirmation.

A new project had formed in his mind, a project beside which the romanticism of his original plan concerning Polly Boone paled to crudest practicality. After all, he said to himself, he was thirty-five and he knew his own mind.

At Marseilles he didn't wait for the Guillotines to wake and realise that they need hunger no longer. He tapped Monsieur Guillotine on the arm.

"The wagon-restaurant is attached."

That disposed of the Guillotines.

"Now can I talk to you?" he asked Miss Mint.

"Do you really want to, your Highness?"

"Very much."

She closed her book, and took off the pleasant spectacles.

"I'm glad. It was growing dull."

"I want to ask you about yourself. Are you married?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Divorced! Why?"

It was rather a jolt, but after all he was

thirty-five.

"Because you're the pleasantest woman I've ever met. You pass the travel test, and it's the supreme one. You have humour. You're exquisite-looking. You know your way about. You're all the things I like. I don't expect you to accept me now, but this is a proposal."

"You're joking."

"Not in the least. I'm thirty-five, and I

know my own mind. I have fifteen hundred a year which I can count on, and I live abroad. You probably have something of your own, but if you haven't we can manage on mine nicely. We know how, both of us. I'll even promise to respect all the Conditions of Millamant, though some of them will be rather hard."

"You don't know my name, your High-

ness.''

"Just Miss Mint is enough for me."

"It's Margery Brereton," she said, as though she were making a revelation.

He'd known she wasn't Polly Boone when she said she was divorced. Well, so much the better. So much the more romantic.

"It's a charming name," he said.

"You don't read the papers, do you? Not even the headlines?"

"Should I know about you?"

"I'm afraid you should. You see, I'm just out of gaol because some charges against me have been dropped."

"Charges of what?"

"Shooting a man I was going to elope with."

Albert Shaw tried not to, but he could not help gasping some rather heavy gasps.

" You!"

"Yes, I, Miss Mint."

"They weren't true, of course?"

"Oh, they were true, but he got well, and

people are nice about such things."
"Well "Albert Show tried

"Well—" Albert Shaw tried to say something. "I'm sure he must have done something—very annoying."

"He had. But under the circumstances I don't think it would be wise to complicate my affairs with another marriage, do you? You see, your travel test isn't very good, your Highness."

"At least," he affirmed, "it proved that you were the pleasantest companion on a

train in the world."

She smiled gratefully at his politeness. Then, evidently, a thought came to her, and the smile changed to a laugh, which was suddenly a perfect gale of irresistible mirth.

"What's the matter?" Albert Shaw

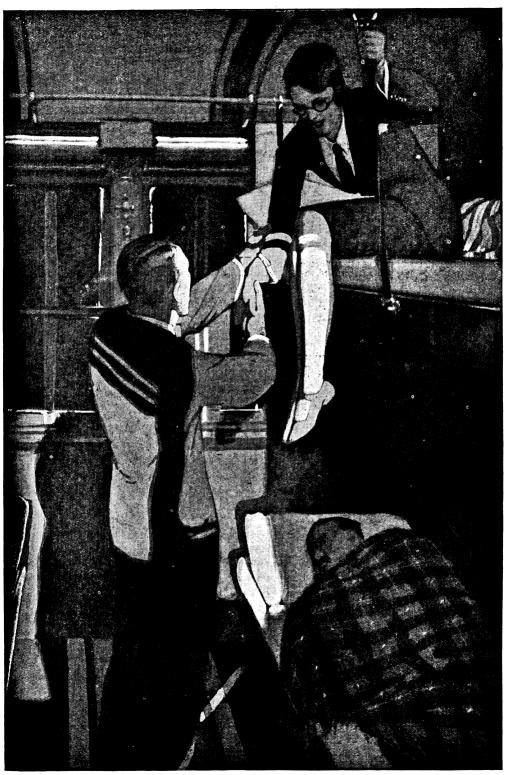
demanded.

Tears of amusement were running down Miss Mint's cheeks.

"You see," she said as soon as she could speak, "the shooting incident happened in

a railway carriage."

She went on laughing, and Albert Shaw joined her. They sat convulsed with a fatigued merriment which was an evasion of ever so many issues.



"Miss Mint was beckoning him. 'I'm awake too, she whispered. 'Help me down.'"

"That does one good," Miss Mint said,

after a time, drying her eyes.

"And if it hadn't been for these complications," Albert Shaw couldn't refrain from asking, "what would you have said to me, Miss Mint?"

"I'm afraid I'd have said 'No,' your Highness. You see, you're not my type. I like you, but I only fall in love with brutes

of men."

"You haven't told me my name yet."

"It only goes to prove the fallibility of your travel test. I'd christened you 'Prince Finnikin,' and you turn out to be the most foolhardy and the most gallant creature I've ever met."

"I still insist that the travel test has merits," Albert Shaw said, looking at her

very hard.

She wanted to say, "You mustn't think I'm glamorous. I'm not really." But she knew that it would have a very hollow ring, and she had determinedly turned her back on the arts of pleasing, though this business of Albert Shaw was a most discouraging

sign.

"But the travel test," she told him, "is one you mustn't use, you very dear person. Do you know you snore awfully? I could have slapped you last night, you wakened me so often."

Joan Pryor was on the platform at Cannes. "Albert Shaw!" she greeted that gentleman. "How nice to see you! Harry's up at the other end with somebody I've been dying to have you meet. Here he is, Harry!"

Harry came toward them. Besides him there strode a big, sensible-looking girl in

white piqué.

"That's my Polly Boone," Joan boasted. "She's going to be with us for a month. Now you can stay at least as long as that, can't you?"

"I'm sorry, Joan," Albert Shaw replied.

"But I just managed to run down for a day or two. Some business has come up."

MUSINGS OF AN OLD MIRROR.

LONG ago my life began,
In the days of Royal Anne;
Many vogues have come and passed,
Mirrored by me while they last.
In my youth the modish flirt
Wore a hooped and panniered skirt;
Later, to enhance her charms,
Waists began beneath the arms.

And her skirts were tight and thin, Till the crinoline came in,
Then, majestic dame, she'd float
In an ample petticoat.
As the century grew old
Wondrous robes did I behold,
Mutton sleeves and bulging bustle
Fated in an age of hustle!

Yes, I've seen a change or two, Witnessed clothes of varied hue, Seen them sober, seen them gay, Tailor-made or fly-away, Sweeping widely o'er the ground, Gathered tightly all around, Seen them long beyond belief, Never seen them quite so brief!

JEAN GRANT.

THE PORCELAIN LADY •

- By VAL GASCOIGNE
- ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE •

PEOPLE talked about Adèle Bourne—in that baffled, exasperated way that people will talk of a woman about whom they cannot trace the smallest scent of a scandal, yet are convinced there must be one.

She was sheerly exquisite, with the fragility, the cool aloofness of a porcelain figure; the finest Dresden shepherdess could not compare with her delicate bloom, the pure turquoise of her eyes, the pale floss of her hair; Peter Bourne's money dressed her divinely, and, after a year of marriage and London society, the disturbing breath of a flirtation had not ruffled so much as a hair of her perfection. People said it was absurd, incredible, to be so exquisite, so obviously not in love with her husband, yet so entirely innocent of entanglement. Such incongruities simply didn't march. But except for the fact that she spent frequent weekends in the country, ostensibly with her people, and came back looking lovelier than ever—renewed is the right word, as if she had bathed in dew-with her hands grubbily full of wild flowers, no one could find anything to say against her, and her enemies grudgingly admitted that she might be a cold fish, while her friends called her the "Porcelain Lady," and her husband worshipped her with that besotted, devastating worship that is only compatible with a man of forty who knows nothing of women and has, for the first time, allowed one to become a dominant factor in his life.

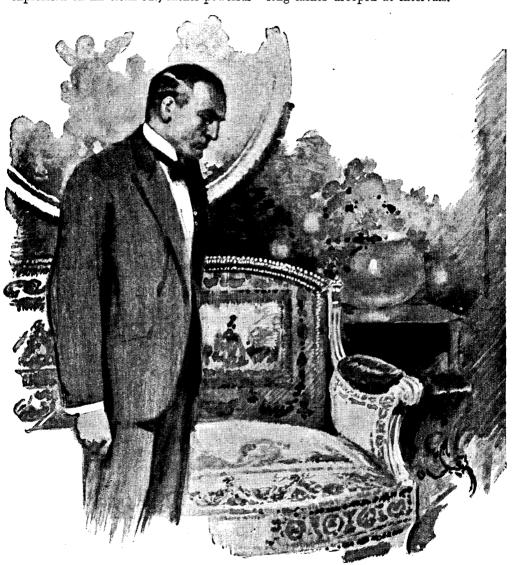
Adèle didn't realise that. She was a simple creature in many ways, and there had been a penniless subaltern on the scene before her rapidly submerging family had driven her into marriage for money with Peter Bourne. And Peter, since it seemed so entirely a business arrangement on her side, had never intruded his personal feel-

ings; he did not want a conscientious woman striving to give him his due of wifely affection; he had always preferred no bread to the half-loaf. So she had married him for the money she did not want and further had complicated the situation by falling hopelessly in love with him afterwards; but since she was proud, and because her family had dinned into her the pleasing knowledge that Peter Bourne—like all self-made men -had merely bought her with other articles of vertu as a beautiful ornament for his house, she had deliberately fashioned herself into nothing but that same beautiful ornament, giving him exactly what she imagined he wanted of her and nothing more.

She was returning that night from one of her snatched and secret week-ends, spent alone with an old servant and an adoring cocker spaniel in an old-world cottage in the heart of the Sussex Downs—a cottage she had bought as a refuge from the social world she hated, the pomp and ceremony that oppressed her, where she spent days of solitary dreaming, of crazy and pathetic planning for the winning of her husband's love-plans she was far too proud to carry out when she returned to the everyday world again and the strongly magnetic personality of Peter Bourne. For it was an added hurt, almost an insult, that he should call to her so strongly and be so indifferent. She often wondered if he really believed in the innocence of those week-ends, but he never said anything. And she told no one else, for who, in her cynical, sceptical world, would have believed her?

He surprised her that evening by meeting her at the station; for the past two months he had rarely left the City before eight, and then only to snatch a hurried dinner and shut himself into his study till the small hours. The Isotta bore them homewards out of the roar of the traffic into the quieter squares—as isolated a pair in the vast silver splendour of the limousine body as they were in their lives.

Peter Bourne lay back in his corner with closed eyes and an entirely enigmatical expression on his clean-cut, rather powerful His wife, wrapped to the chin in soft grey furs, stared out at the lights of Knightsbridge slipping past with an equally enigmatic expression. She, too, might have been bored, planning some colossal deal with her dressmaker, or asleep, when her long lashes drooped at intervals.



face. He might have been bored, sleeping, or planning some colossal deal that would set stocks dancing like a fever temperature. For Bourne was one of those mysterious "big noises" in the financial world that usually comprises unlimited credit, the bitterest kind of warfare, and crises that end in social extinction or a nervous breakdown.

Held up by a traffic block, she saw Peter glance at his watch and said suddenly, thinking how white and tired he looked:

"Are you working late to-night—again?"
A little worried line deepened between his fine black brows.

"I must." He added with a curious twist to his lips, "It will be for the last time." She thought: "Oh, Lord, haven't we money enough? Why does he worship it so?" She would have worked her fingers to the bone for him in that adorable little cottage of hers if only he wanted her as she wanted him, but she knew that men do not give up being exciting things like bulls and bears to be mere husbands—even if they love their wives

She said coldly, "It's foolish to overdo things. You ought to take a holiday."

As the block seemed likely to continue for another ten minutes, he sat up suddenly, glanced out of the window and said jerkily, without looking at her, "I've something to tell you, Adèle."

Something in face and voice hinted at disaster; she wondered hopefully if they



"She had deliberately fashioned herself into nothing but that same beautiful ornament, giving him exactly what she imagined he wanted of her and nothing more."

were ruined and said "Yes?" inquir-

He said slowly: "I had to go and see Sir Luke Austin this evening . . . that's why

I'm early."

She started at that. "Not the—the oculist?" she asked, a little breathlessly. "Why, Peter—is anything wrong with your eves?"

He nodded, still looking away. "I've been having such infernal headaches—it began to interfere with my work—I asked Spencer for something for them last week . . . he told me to go to Austin at once. I couldn't manage it till to-night . . ." He switched off the light quickly as he spoke and she saw his hand was not quite steady.

She gripped her own together in her lap. "What did Sir Luke say?" she got out at

last.

He told her briefly, trying to hide the fear that possessed him.

"Nerves—and overstrain, and possibly a recurrence of the trouble I had during the War with that head-wound. He said—six months' complete rest at the least."

"Ah!" She drew a long breath and her own fear receded a little. "I told you you needed a change," she said, achieving her old cool tones again. "Why not take that Norway fishing you were talking about the other day?"

He bit his lip suddenly. "I can't. It's—worse than that, Adèle... I mustn't use my eyes at all. He said—a month in complete darkness to begin with, possibly longer."

She grappled successfully with a mad longing to take him in her arms and kiss away the fear he had not been able to hide.

"What a frightful bore for you," she said lightly, as if he had casually mentioned a

tiresome dinner engagement.

He agreed that, "Yes—it was rather," putting back into its proper place the ache to hear her say, "Darling—I'm so sorry," as any ordinary wife, not a cold porcelain lady, would have said.

"But you'll be all right—after?" she questioned. After all, that was a thing even a wife who didn't love her husband might legitimately ask, and she wanted to know so desperately.

She saw his hand clench as he answered, "I—don't know. He wouldn't say anything very definite—you know what those chaps are. I've got to go to him again at the end of the month."

"I'm sorry, Peter," she said then. That remark, too, might be duly expected. It

betrayed nothing. She added, "Have you

to stop in a dark room, then?"

"No. I've got to have my eyes bandaged so that I can be out as much as possible. I'll have to find some quiet country place where I can go with Parker—I don't want to be an infernal nuisance to anyone. Spencer's coming round early to-morrow to fix me up . . . he wanted to start in to-night but I told him I must have this evening for work, whatever happened."

She said rather urgently then, "Peter, is that wise? Ought you to take the risk?"

The Isotta shot forward again and he said a little indistinctly above the hum of traffic, "They weren't so encouraging that a few hours more or less will make much difference. Anyway, it has to be done." He leant back in his corner, closing his eyes against the glare of light, desperately facing the double fear of blindness and of being a burden to a woman who did not love him.

She sat back in her corner, watching him like a thwarted Madonna; wondering just what those doctors had told him, how serious things really were, what it was he had withdrawn into himself to face alone. Longing for him to turn to her, to say, "Darling, I can face it—if only you'll stand by . . ." as any husband not a confirmed bull or bear and worshipper of Mammon would have said. Two foolish people wanting nothing in the world but each other, having everything in the world but just that.

Late the next afternoon Peter Bourne left the Isotta at the foot of the rough Downland track that led to the porcelain lady's cottage, and, guided by his man, came slowly up the path, feeling alternately irritable, miserable and bewildered. It was an entirely new thing for him to be ordered about and looked after, and they'd been doing one or the other to him all day. hadn't been able to resist them, either, he'd felt so infernally helpless in the dark-Spencer's bandaging had been thorough, it might be midnight now for all he knewthey'd just talked over his head about some Sussex cottage kept by an old servant of Adèle's; decided it would be just the place for him and packed him off there. In the end, he hadn't minded much: anything was better than that huge, desolate country place of theirs down in Hereford; he felt like something small and homely where he wouldn't lose himself too often in the dark.

He'd come down alone with Parker . . . Adèle had said good-bye casually early in

the day and gone off somewhere, "a long-standing engagement," she had murmured as she went. He'd thought she might have come down with him just for the first time . . . you felt so lonely in the dark . . . there he'd pulled himself up sharply. Why on earth should she? She didn't care the first thing about him—it had only been the money.

Standing on the doorstep of her cottage, in a pink print frock that crackled like all the best housemaids' dresses, Adèle awaited her husband's arrival. She was praying that he would not know her and practising a French accent under her breath in a soft, husky voice that held nothing of her usual cold, clear tones, in preparation for her rôle of the niece of Susan, the old servant, whose sister had run away with a French artist. For that was the part the porcelain lady meant to play for the next month if she were not discovered before; to make one pathetic, tremendous bid for happiness, to show Peter Bourne his wife as she really was through another girl's eyes, and to learn if there were the smallest chance of his ever loving her. For she must learn that, must show him that she cared, before the final verdict of the doctors; she would never be able to convince him that she had more than pity to give if-if the very worst were to happen.

She caught a pleasant, entirely respectful twinkle in Parker's eyes as he guided Peter up the path—she'd had to confide her scheme to him, of course, but she hadn't minded much. He'd been with her people for years before Peter had taken him on, he was devoted to both of them, and he'd seen she wasn't happy. Setting her teeth, she came forward to introduce herself.

"I am Jeannette, M'sieu', the niece of the old Susan. Your wife has spoken to you of me, she say . . ."

Peter started a little. Yes, there had been some mention of a French niece; he remembered now Adèle had said she would read to him. A charming girl, she had said, and more of their own class than Susan's. Her voice puzzled him, it recalled Adèle's, but so much softer and with that funny little accent; the hand he held fitted the voice perfectly, soft yet strong; he wished he could see her. All the same, he didn't much want a woman about him now, it only made him want Adèle all the more.

He said politely, "I hope I shan't be too much bother to you," and added abruptly, "Your voice reminds me of my wife's." She said quietly, "Yes—she thought it would. She is a ver' charming lady, Mrs. Bourne . . . I learn much of my English from her when she come here . . ." and led him triumphantly into the cottage. It wasn't going to be difficult to keep up her rôle now the first test of voice and touch had been successfully overcome.

Left alone, whilst Parker wrestled with luggage and the cubic capacity of the cottage. and "Jeannette" went to fetch tea, Peter heard the Isotta's departing scream of rage at an obstructing farm-cart with a sudden sense of desolation. His head was aching badly, every nerve was on edge from the long drive down, when every swerve had seemed magnified a thousand times in the darkness; he was extraordinarily tired now that he had given way at last, and horribly afraid of the future. In sudden desperation he put up his hands to the bandages over his eyes, then dropped them impotently, remembering the doctors' urgent warnings, and gripped the arms of his chair instead. Wondered how he was going to stand a month of this—and possibly longer.

The porcelain lady, coming in then, saw his attitude and ached to put her arms round all the pathetic helplessness of him; saw him bite his lips fiercely at her step, trying to pull himself together, and knew that even as "Jeannette" there was much she could do. She might—she thought hopefully—even be a bit of a baggage as a French girl.

Going to his side, she laid a cool hand on his and said in a quiet, matter-of-fact way that insensibly soothed him:

"You are ver' tired, M'sieu', and it is all so strange . . . I know. Take your tea now and then a little sleep . . . it will all be easier presently."

Her cool, strong hand still steadied his; he found himself clutching at it with no thought for the strangeness of it, for the fact that he had barely known her five minutes. Found himself drinking fragrant China tea, eating delectable little cakes just hot from the girdle, enjoying it, forgetting, till she stabbed him, suddenly saying:

"Your wife love these little gâteaux, M'sieu'. I make them always when she come here."

"Does she come often?" The question escaped him involuntarily. The girl must think it strange that he should not know his own wife's movements.

"Mais oui—ver' often," the husky voice assured him. "She love this cottage, she come most of the week-ends."

"You know her well, then, I suppose?" he managed to say, trying to crush down the horrible suspicion that had seized him at her words. In very decency he could not put the urgent question that trembled on his lips.

"Ver' well, M'sieu' . . . and I admire her ver' much, but—but I find her a little

strange."

"Strange?" he echoed desperately, wishing he could see her as she talked. Women's voices were so deceptive when they meant to hide anything, and "Jeannette" might have no scruples in hiding an intrigue—if he could dream of anything so horrible in connection with his porcelain lady.

The soft, husky voice answered him de-

liberately.

"Strange that she should look so lovely—with that cold English loveliness, so much une grande dame and yet be so simple. For she is ver' simple at heart, is she not, M'sieu'? It is strange to me that she should look so like a figure of porcelain and be so sweet, so real a woman."

"What does she do here?" He put the question deliberately, banishing the thought that "Jeannette" was a total stranger, and that he had never discussed

his wife with anyone.

"She play with the dogs, M'sieu', she feed the ducks and hens, she make cakes, she help ma tante with her jams, she polish the table and chairs—they are a ver' beautiful old oak, M'sieu'—she walk without her shoes and stockings over the downs to paddle in the dew-pond—English ladies are ver' funny, I find," Jeannette added frankly, "and she lie in the hammock and think a lot, and most of all she talk to me."

Peter Bourne listened in a stunned silence, trying to reconcile the Adèle he knew with this incredible picture old Susan's niece was evolving for him. He said at last, slowly:

"What do you talk about, Jeannette?" She laughed softly as she answered, "Why, of you, M'sieu'. I think she care—too much to think of much else." She clinked the cups as she began to clear the tea away. "Mais oui, M'sieu', she love you ver' much," she ended with decision. "She cry—to-day—when she tell me of your eyes"—that was a slip, but he did not notice it.

Peter gripped the arms of his chair as if he needed something solid to hold on to in the midst of this crazy chaos his ordered world had suddenly become. It couldn't possibly be true—he could never reconcile the two Adèles, the simple girl of the cottage and the porcelain lady. Either "Jeannette" was hopelessly deceived or he was dreaming. He couldn't bear much more just then, and sent for Parker to read him *The Times*—he felt solid facts were what he needed.

But during the next interminable month he grew to depend very much on "Jeannette," even though she sometimes maddened him with her incredible talk of his wife. She always seemed to know when his head ached, when the dark got too desperately on his nerves, when he wanted to be alone and when he didn't; she was always there with her cool, soft hands and warm, human sympathy, and sometimes, though he never forgot Adèle in word or deed, in his loneliness and his fears, "Jeannette" was almost dangerously sweet.

With her he lost much of the reserve that had hidden him from his wife, and to the porcelain lady the growing intimacy of those four weeks was very precious, for in a thousand little ways Peter had betrayed the fact that he was in love with his wife, and she knew that soon she could tell him the truth and make an end of "Jeannette," of whom she was growing a little jealous!

The night before he was to go to the oculist again, he said suddenly as she sat with him in the warm, May-scented garden:

"I'm funking to-morrow—horribly, Jeannette. I keep thinking—suppose they can't do anything for me... suppose at the end of the six months it's going to be always—like this?" He touched his bandaged eyes with a sudden desperate gesture.

She said quietly, "I will not believe the worst, M'sieu'. You are better in so many ways than when you came—you have been ver' good, ver' patient, you have kept in the dark all the time. I think it will be all right for you, to-morrow." Then, deliberately, she took his hands in hers and ventured a step further. "But, M'sieu', if it must be—you still have your wife. I think now she mean more to you even than that."

He gripped her hands hard. "She means—everything, Jeannette. But you know—everyone knows—she only married me for my money. I don't blame her; we made a bargain and she's kept it faithfully enough; she's been a model wife—outwardly. But it's only the money she cares for and the life it brings her." He added harshly, "God knows I want to believe in the woman you've shown me, but I can't. The Adèle

you know is only a fantasy of your own brain—I have never seen her."

"Have you ever looked for her?"
"Jeannette's" voice had hardened imperceptibly. "A woman always give a man what he ask from her, M'sieu'. You forget that you bought her, she have given you what you paid for . . . did you ever ask anything more of her than just those stupid worldly things? She lead this gay society life because she think that is why you marry her—to shine in your house, a beautiful ornament, something to hang your money on, the money that she hates—but it is the girl of the downs, the girl of the simple heart, the simple life, that is the real woman. I know it. M'sieu'."

He said stubbornly, "You are wrong, Jeannette. It pleases her to play at simplicity down here, as it pleases all society women for a time . . . that is all. She is beautiful and cold and heartless—and she has never loved me." He bit his lip fiercely. "How can she care? . . . she has never written me one word since I came here . . ."

"How should you know?" "Jeannette's" voice was almost as cold as the porcelain lady's then. "She does not know you love her—should she give away her heart to a man who has bought her? I tell you, M'sieu', that she love you—more than any man deserve to be loved, and it nearly break her heart because you do not see, because you love nothing but money—money—money."

The sudden passion in her voice shook him momentarily. He said uncertainly: "How are you so sure, Jeannette?"

She said quietly, "Because she told me, M'sieu'." And with that she left him.

The Isotta brought him back to the downs the next evening, and once again the porcelain lady awaited his return on the step of her cottage. She watched in breathless suspense to see him emerge from the car, for if the doctors had allowed him to see once more, she must meet him as herself and find some plausible excuse for the absence of "Jeannette." But he came up the path as usual, leaning on Parker's arm and feeling his way with his stick, and she saw with a quick stab at her heart that the bandages still covered his eyes, and that the face beneath them was very grim and She greeted him in "Jeannette's" soft, foreign tones a little fearfully and was relieved to see how his face relaxed at her voice. Longing to hear the verdict, yet almost afraid to ask, she took him into the cottage and guided him to his chair.

He clutched like a child at her hand; she could feel him trembling against her.

"Jeannette—she's gone."

"Who?" she said gently, not understanding.

"Adèle—my wife. I went home to-day after I'd seen Austin—I thought I might find her in——" He paused a second. "They told me she had gone away the same day that I came down here . . . she hadn't been back since . . . they had no address for her letters . . ." Again he paused and she said slowly, feeling her way:

"What are you thinking, M'sieu'?"

"What am I to think?" he flung out fiercely. "I've been nearly mad with thinking all the way back. Jeannette"—he gripped her hands till she nearly cried out—"tell me—don't lie now if you've any feeling for me at all—forget you're a woman and you've got to stand by her . . . tell me . . . was she always alone down here at this cottage? Oh, I know I'm a swine to ask you, but I shall go mad if I don't know the truth. Tell me—was she alone?"

And she answered gently, "Always, M'sieu'—save for the spaniel dog and the old Susan—always alone."

His hands relaxed a little and she added swiftly, "Do not always think the worst, M'sieu'. There is some mistake—I know it. She would never leave you like this."

He dropped his head back hopelessly against the chair.

"I don't know," he said wearily. "One is so—helpless in the dark—so easy to deceive."

She winced at that. Would he forgive the deception when he knew? She knelt at his side, her hands still in his.

"Tell me," she whispered, "of your eyes. What did they say?"

"They aren't any better—he told me I'd been worrying too much. I know I have, but how, in Heaven's name, could one help it? I've got to go on for another fortnight like this, then see him again—he may try some other treatment." He caught his lip in his teeth an instant. "He was very decent, but he wouldn't say anything definite . . . he gave me the impression he wasn't very hopeful, really." He stopped abruptly, and she said softly, yet passionately:

"I am so sorry," with a quick pressure of

He turned his head, looking down as if he could see her.



"He came up the path as usual, leaning on Parker's arm and feeling his way with his stick-



—and she saw with a quick stab at her heart that the bandages still covered his eyes."

"Yes—I know you are. It's good to get back to you, Jeannette. It's been such a long day-alone." He added, as if to himself—"I must get used to that—now."

"What do you mean?" she whispered. She drew a little closer; there was a subtle scent of some flower from her hair; in the midst of his trouble it stirred him strangely.

He spoke steadily. "I've got to face it, Jeannette. I know—from what Austin said, or didn't say, that I've only one chance in a hundred of saving my sight. If it goesdo you suppose the woman who left mein that uncertainty-will come back when she knows?" There was undisguised bitterness in his voice.

He felt her hands free themselves from his, creep up softly and touch his cheek; that subtle flower fragrance deepened; her voice came brokenly with all the love in the world.

"If she do not-will you not take meinstead?" And her mouth brushed his as softly as a bird's wing.

He stiffened an instant against the impulse to yield to her, for even Adèle's desertion had not succeeded in killing the love he had for the porcelain lady; but the sudden passionate desire for something warm, human, respondent, the desperate need to save something out of the wreck of his life, were momentarily too strong for Peter Bourne. His arms went round her swiftly, drawing her close, while his lips found hers as one coming upon water in the desert places; and then, as he felt her yield with a tiny sigh, he caught her whispered words against his mouth: "Peter...Peter.... have I found you at last?" No longer the soft, husky accents of "Jeannette," but cool and clear as of old, only now most lovinghis wife's voice, the porcelain lady. . . .

He began to shiver suddenly like a fright-

ened thoroughbred.

"Jeannette . . . Jeannette . . ." he stammered, and again she breathed, "Oh. Peter—" and stayed silent in his arms.

His grip tightened. "Your voice," he "I must be mad or dreaming, said tensely. but I thought . . . for God's sake don't play with me now-when I can't see you . . . Jeannette—who are you?"

She drew his face down to hers again.

"Just two women who love you," she " 'Jeannette's ' murmured. Adèle—and yours!"

With a stifled sound he released her suddenly, raised his hands to his eyes and tore away the bandages, forgetful of everything but that one dominant need—to see the truth. Found himself looking straight into the exquisite, tremulous face of the porcelain lady, her cool, unruffled perfection gone for ever now, her mouth quivering from his kisses, her eyes great with love.

He drew a long breath. "You!" he said unsteadily. "You-all the time, Adèle . . ."

She said urgently, "Oh, Peter-your eves-" and tried to cover them with her hands.

He said with a shaky laugh, "Oh, drown my eyes—it's worth everything to see you once-like this. Adèle, my sweet, is it really true, all that 'Jeannette' said? Is that the real you—the girl of the simple heart, the simple life . . . and have you loved me all the time as I've loved you ? "

She nodded, flushing. "All the time. Peter darling-I was only a porcelain lady in sheer self-defence because I thought you'd -bought me, and I loved you so I couldn't bear it. Forgive me, Peter-I had to deceive you, to know if you really cared . . . it seemed the only way, and I simply couldn't bear you to go through everything alone, without me. Do you love me still, Peter—or is it Jeannette?"

"It's both of you," he answered instantly. "And if I've anything to forgive, remember -it was 'Jeannette' I thought I kissed!"

"She made you," the porcelain lady acquitted him instantly. "She was a little hussy, Peter—I was getting so jealous of

"She kept me sane all this time," he said soberly, "and she's brought me to you. But, Adèle, I want you to realise that I never really forgot you-all through, even when 'Jeannette' was sometimes dangerously sweet."

"I know that," she answered quietly; "it made me care all the more, Peter. You can say 'Good-bye, Jeannette,' with an easy conscience now."

He stooped his head and kissed her hands

"Good-bye, Jeannette," he murmured. Then stretched out his hands to her with a little smile. "And now, my porcelain lady —one last look, to remember—before I go back to the dark."

She leaned to him with a little sigh.

"The porcelain lady is broken," she whispered happily, "but oh, Peter, my darling, take up the pieces in your arms."

THE LAND-LUBBERS

H. MORTIMER BATTEN

ILLUSTRATED BY LANCE

NOMING fishing, Cynthia?" They stood on the old stone pier at the loch margin under the shadow of the castle, and it was a glorious evening.

"I'd love to," said Cynthia, and as she came towards him Guy thought she had never looked so beautiful. But he thought that every time he saw her. He was only eighteen. "I'd love to, but really I daren't. They are expecting me for bridge—your uncle, Auntie Mary, and the rest. Fancy bridge on a night like this, when one ought to be on the sea!" and Cynthia shuddered.

Guy was standing in one of the boats, and as she came up to him he took her handsavagely, compellingly. Even the old Highland fishermen who were standing by smiled to themselves as they saw the unmistakable gesture. They were too well bred to nod and to smile to each other.

"Then come fishing," said Guy. "Do! I'm going, anyway, and if I go alone I shall just be miserable. If you go to play bridge you will be miserable. Let's both be supremely happy for just one evening. Come on, Cynthia!"

"I'd love to," she repeated, looking back at the great grey castle with its stone walls and its slits of windows, and making no effort to withdraw her hand. "But I simply daren't."

He resisted the impulse to tell her that she ought to, if only for the colour of the waters. He was looking into her eyes, but that kind of thing seemed too like speechmaking, so he waved towards the sunset, which was running rampant over Jura and Scarba and the regions of the sea.

"Doesn't that call you?" he asked. "It calls me."

"It does," she admitted, "but I can't come.'

"Not to-night?" he asked, and he asked

in such a way that she answered with another question—"Why to-night?"

"Because it's such a beautiful night. Because the saith and the mackerel are in, because—most of all I am going away tomorrow."

She said nothing, and Guy motioned to one of the boatmen standing near. "Can you take us round the Rabbit Island?" he asked, and the man grinned jubilantly as he touched his cap. He went back to the rocky outcrop, got two bamboo fishing-rods and a clumsy paper parcel which was evidently his own property, and, everything

fixed up, they pushed off.

"You are simply awful," said Cynthia, with obvious delight at having broken bounds. Then she called over her shoulder: "Tell them I shall be back in time for bridge, Evans. We are going to get a mackerel for breakfast." And old Evans, the chauffeur, who was down at the landing-stage with a spear to spear plaice, and incidentally a spanner to tune up the motor-boat, grinned and said, "Very good, my lady."

There was scarcely enough breeze to fill the sail, and Guy and Cynthia were seated astern on the elevated platform from which they were to ply their rods. Guy was savagely stuffing tobacco into his pipe, as he said to the boatman, "Good catches recently, McPhail?"

"Excellent catches, sir."

"What's the parcel?" asked Guy, nodding towards the brown-paper bundle.

There was a pause; then, "I thought as you were going round the Rabbit Island, ye'd no mind my stepping ashore at the point where my mother lives. It's her laundry, ye ken, sir," said McPhail.

"Excellent!" muttered Guy.

"Certainly!" added Cynthia, and Guy pondered upon the wisdom of his fellowmen, of old servants in particular.

"Since it's en route," he added, "we might as well sail straight there—eh, Cynthia?"

So they went straight there, and as the little boat bumped the mussel-hung pier in the little blue bay, with its white-walled cottages nestling above, McPhail jumped ashore and patted the sheep-dog that had run down to greet him. It was all very still and very peaceful, the far-off mewing of the gulls coming like silver bells over the quietude.

"I won't be ten minutes, sir," said McPhail. "By the time you are round the

island, I'll be back."

So Guy pulled out. Now that he really had Cynthia beside him, he found that he had precious little to say—he could think of none of the million things he wanted to say. She was humming softly.
"Fish!" said Guy, almost impatiently.

"Start fishing."

"All right," Cynthia answered. "It isn't of much use till we get round the point,

but I'll fish if you want me to."

She managed somehow to get the lines entangled, and was proceeding to make matters much worse when Guy shipped the oars and went to her aid. He got the lines disengaged, but it necessitated holding one of her wrists. The boat drifted, Guy still held her wrist.

"Why fish?" he asked.

"Why not fish?" she answered. told me to. We came ostensibly for that purpose."

"We can fish any time," said Guy.

She dabbled the line hopefully. certainly can't fish unless you row," she pointed out.

"Then I don't want to row," said Guy. "Why?" she asked suddenly, chiefly because it was the first word that came into her head, and anyway she did not want another silence.

"Because it would be much nicer towell, to look at the sunset over Scarba!"

"We can see the sunset nearly any day,"

Cynthia pointed out.

He was still on his knees at her feet. "I've got to go to-morrow, Cynthia," he said, "then it will be India, and just memories for a little time."

"Memories are excellent," Cynthia said. "I'm told that when you grow old they are

half of life."

"But we haven't grown old," Guy argued.

"No, but we've got to," she answered,

looking at him and touching his cheek with

her cool, sea-moist finger-tips.

"Then," said he, "that's all the more reason why we should clutch our memories when the chance comes. I fancy one memory will live—the blue sea and those islands, and——" He looked at her. Her sea-green shimmering frock seemed to sit about her like a beautiful thing of the seaa sea plant, in which a flower of exquisite beauty and tenderness was growing.

"You impossibly beautiful thing!" Guy muttered. "I love the sea and the great open spaces and these wonderful islands. but they are just you—you with your grace and your beauty and your greatness!"

A moment she sat looking down at him, half undecidedly and thoughtfully, then she shrugged her shoulders. "Silly boy!" said Cynthia. "Don't you understand that it's just the surroundings, not me? Up here, where--

"It isn't, Cynthia! It's you!" he said earnestly. "I'm not new to the country. I have loved it all my life, but never as I love it now."

There was a pause, then—"Simply

because you've got to leave it."

"Yes," he answered, "and leave you. Five years at least. Heaven knows what may happen in that time."

"Yes," said Cynthia, "and in less time than that if you don't look after those

He returned to his seat amidships and pulled the boat round the rocks they were almost grazing, and into the next bay. He was about to return to her, when suddenly she exclaimed: "There's a seal! A seal with its baby! Do pull after it, Guy!"

He pulled. The big black head of the mother of the deep was not fifty feet away. but the young seal was much closer, and obviously overcome with curiosity at the appearance of the boat. The mother was trying to entice it off, and the little one was divided between two interests—the call of its mother and its inquisitiveness as to the human beings. It kept coming towards them and then swimming off, and so it came about that the mother was leading them farther afield. Guy was pulling his hardest, till eventually both seals sank with a resounding thud, and finally disappeared.

"Well," said Guy, having turned the boat, "I suppose I shall have to row back? That cloud over the sun is making it dark."

"Yes, do," returned Cynthia. "I shall

be late for bridge. Make straight for the headland."

Neither knew that part of the coast particularly well, for they had left their frequented fishing grounds, but Guy pulled steadily round the point and beyond, till at the next point he found the shore running southwest instead of north-east. The headland, indeed, was not the mainland at all, but one of the many little islands.

"Then that's the headland over there," said Cynthia. "Come on, Guy. We'll take an oar each. Fishing seems to be a wash-

out, anyway."

They took an oar each, and so in due course reached the distant point, though it was a long pull. It was now almost dark save for the glow on the water, and as they rounded the point there came to their ears a curious sighing and rippling, almost like the breeze in the pine-woods.

"Give me that oar, Cynthia, will you?" said Guy. "I can steer better with both

oars.''

"I'm all right," said Cynthia. "I'm not such a weakling as that, and I could pull

for miles yet."

"Give me that oar!" repeated Guy, taking it from her, and a moment later he was pulling as though his life depended upon it towards the south side of the island. But as he pulled, the wind-like murmur seemed to draw nearer until it engulfed them, and all at once an oily surge was all round the boat with its multitudinous murmur and ripple. The island was fading steadily astern. Somewhere far off a lighthouse flashed and faded, while still Guy pulled as though his life depended upon it. The sweat was streaming down his forehead, and Cynthia, though conscious of a sense of alarm, said nothing, till at length Guy dashed his hand across his face and rested his oars. It was now quite dark and no land was in sight.

"Gad, for a rocket!" said Guy with a

short laugh.

"A rocket?" repeated Cynthia. "Goodness, why? We're not shipwrecked

surely?"

"No," he answered, "nor likely to be." He laughed and mopped again. "I'm afraid it's hopeless to try to pull out of this stuff," he went on, indicating the oily swirl. "I'm frightfully sorry, Cynthia. The one time I should have kept sight of my landmarks, I've lost all count of them, which shows what kind of a creature I am. Anyway, we're caught by the Strome Strait

tide, and it's hopeless trying to pull out of it."

"The Strome Strait tide!" she echoed. From her childhood she had heard of it as a terrible, inexorable thing, which fed upon the heedless and the unwary who went down to the sea.

"Yes," he answered. "I'd forgotten that the tide is running out; forgotten everything but you. It runs about half a mile west of Rabbit Island—you can see it from there—then it veers inland round the point to Bullnose Island, which was the one we mistook for the mainland. We're in it properly, and it would be dangerous rather than otherwise to run inland."

"What then?" queried Cynthia.

"Simply let it carry us," he said. "An hour or two hence every motor-boat will be out of the harbours looking for us, and when they find us I shall look the choicest fool that ever was, quite apart from the telling off I shall get from Uncle."

"But the Strome Strait Gulf!" muttered Cynthia. "It's a deadly thing, Guy—

deadly dangerous!"

"Why?" he questioned quietly. "Why dangerous, this time of the year? It's as calm as a mill-pool. There are no more islands now it can pile us up against, only the open sea. At the worst we shall merely drift under the shelter of friendly old Jura, then row ashore."

"All the same," said Cynthia, "I'm

frightened."

Again he laughed, and took her hands, and she could see the laughter in his eyes as he looked up at her. "Frightened?" he said. "What of?"

"Of the sea," she answered. "Of the immense, immeasurable sea, with its—"

"Its what?" he asked.

"Its innumerable dead," said Cynthia.

Guy laughed again and pressed her fingers to his lips. The cold, ruddy light, the last northern light of sunset, which illuminated the air without lighting sea or land, touched his forehead, and lent a wonderful lustre to her hair and to the sea-green frock with its gathering folds.

"Of the sea?" he said mysteriously. "The good, kind old sea? I never fear it, in spite of its innumerable dead, which I believe it took kindly. You mean you are afraid of death, Cynthia. Why? I'm not."

"Then you ought to be," she answered. "It's only natural and healthy to be."

"No, are you afraid of it?" he added heedlessly.

Then she realised that she was not—not afraid of death, only of the quietness and the immensity and the majesty of the things which out here seemed to speak of it.

"And you are the boy who didn't want the Army," she reminded him. "That, of course, is Uncle's grouse. That's why he traps me for bridge and golf and all the other deadly things, so that I can't go fishing with you. He thinks you funked it."

Guy laughed. "The Army!" he echoed.

he is a brave man, hints that you are. My brother Bill, who was at Oxford with you, said that you funked at Rugger, albeit you rose to some distinction on account of your pace. I really want to know—are you a funk. Guy?"

Guy was again thrusting tobacco into his pipe, while about them the sea swirled and rippled, and a baby moon peeped over Jura. "Are you a funk?" The words seemed to be scorching into his brain.



"He was still holding her hands, looking up into her face, and, like the queen of his dreams, she stooped and very slowly kissed his lips."

"That's not death. It's life! But I tell you what, Cynthia, I wouldn't like to die in the mud or shut up in an iron safe. That has always been my worst kind of nightmare. But out here, with the sea and the splendour and the islands, I wouldn't be afraid of anything. Anyway, why talk such stuff? We're going to be adrift for a long time, so why not talk of pleasanter things?"

"Because there is one thing I want to know, Guy," she said, and her grip on his fingers tightened. "Are you a funk? Your uncle, and there is proof enough that

"Did Bill say so?" he asked. "My old pal Bill?"

She could not look at him. She rested her chin in her hands and stared across the water.

"Then if Bill said so," Guy went on, "I suppose I am. Bill is a man of sound judgment, but there is one thing you can tell him, that I would stand up for my pals under any circumstances, and would not hear a word against them."

hear a word against them."

There was a pause, then, "Bill is my brother," said Cynthia. "He's a great

man. He didn't funk at Rugger. He's a soldier of the first water, but when he and I were alone on the moor one night," she added, "Bill was scared. You wouldn't have been scared, would you, Guy?"

"Not on "No," he said determinedly. your life. Every man to his own sphere, and I feel this is mine." He flung out his arms towards the wide, merciless sea and the islands. "Some day those islands may be mine," he went on, "and sooner than soldiering, I'd like to see those islands better off, as they deserve to be. I want to see it a better land, with better means of trans-searnestly. "I don't mean great in the way port, better chances for the people who deserve it. That's my sphere, Cynthia, and other men can do the soldiering. Most of all," he added, "I want someone to stand by me who loves this region as well as I do, and its people."

He was still holding her hands, looking up into her face, and, like the queen of his dreams, she stooped and very slowly kissed his lips. Guy hung his head, as though amidst the majesty and the greatness and the wonderment of it all he had realised something higher than his highest dreams, more beautiful than the dawn among the islands.

At length he spoke. "My Cynthia!" he said. "Heaven has been kind to me. I suppose I am one of the silver-spoon fellows, brought up among beautiful gardens, peaceful scenes, and gentle people. You and I have never been hungry and wet and cold, and do you know, Cynthia, I think I rather want to be before I marry you. I shall marry you, shan't I, Cynthia, because there are no other people in the world for you and me? Because, when I am away, I shall always be thinking of you and these beautiful things. Heavens, when I see you sitting there like a queen, I can think only of the things that make men decent and great. I shall marry you, shan't I, Cynthia?"

"Yes," she answered, looking out to sea again. "That is as certain as the

"As the dawn!" he echoed. "My princess of the dawn, where the grey seal wakes! That's why I am going out into the stony places to live a man's life in a country for men, and when I come back perhaps you and the Colonel and Bill will no longer think of me just as the boy who didn't want to be a soldier."

"You aren't a soldier, Guy," she told him. "You never will be. You are just a poet."

"Some of our greatest soldiers were," he

"No," she answered. "Our greatest sailors. You are a sailor, Guy. A great sailor. At any rate, I shall think of you in the meantime as my sailor boy."

"Yes," he answered, with a short laugh, "who lost you among the islands and ran you into the Strome Strait! Some sailor! And, anyway, there's nothing great about me. Not yet, but with that kiss of yours, I shall try."

"You will really try, Guy?" said Cynthia of cutting a manly figure among other men. I am so tired of that kind. I mean great in always doing the quiet, decent thing, not for yourself but for everyone. I mean great " And she swept her hand towards the farflung islands. "Oh, I don't know what I mean. What are those birds?"

"Manx shearwater," said Guy. "Aren't they ghostly in the gloom? I know what you mean, Cynthia. Yes, I'll try to be great in your way."

There was a silence, then she said, "It's

rather nice being lost at sea."

"Yes," he answered, "but the pity is we shall not be lost much longer. Do you hear that launch? It sounds to me like Uncle's old tub—cut out on one cylinder, occasionally missing fire in a second. If old Evans sawed off the two end cylinders she would go ever so much better.'

"Don't you tell your Uncle so," advised

"I shan't tell him anything for a day or two. Gad, Cynthia, I'm for it! I feel like creeping into a casserole and shutting down the lid tightly. What shall I say to him?"

"Precisely nothing," replied Cynthia. "Just leave him to me. We'll let him

froth and froth, then—"
"Yes," added Guy, "then you'll blow the froth off, and he'll be as cool and refreshing as an iced lager. All the same, I'm for it. And what about Auntie Mary?"

"Auntie Mary won't say a word," she

assured him.

"No, but she'll look. Here they come, Cynthia. I'll have to twinkle the flashlamp. I wonder if they'll see it all that way off? I rather hope they won't."

But they did. Twenty minutes later a long boat-hook clasped their freeboard, and they were hauled sternly alongside the launch. Only the Colonel and his old chauffeur, Evans, were aboard, and it was Evans who helped them in. "Not a word, sir!" he whispered to Guy. "He's fuming!"

The Colonel turned from the wheel as Guy went to him. "Darned young fool!" he exploded. "You've no right to take a girl out when you can't keep your land-

The Colonel's sight was notoriously erratic, and meantime Guy noticed that they were bearing down on a half-acre patch of weed which was swirling along on the bosom of the tide, enough weed to put



"Overboard he went, taking the long boat-hook with him."

marks any further than you could chuck her!"
"Sorry, Uncle!" murmured Guy.

"Beastly sorrry!"

"Sorry!" fumed the Colonel. "So you jolly well ought to be! I should think you are sorry! Silly young land-lubber—so cocksure that you get into a mess like this! Every motor-launch down the coast will be looking for you by now, and a pretty penny it will cost—your father!"

their propeller out of action for the remainder of the night.

"Excuse me, Uncle," said Guy. "Port your helm! That's weed over there."

"Can't I see it's weed?" the Colonel flung back, swinging round the wheel hand over hand. "Get out of my sight, Guy! I don't want to look at you!"

So Guy went back to the engine, where Cynthia and the old chauffeur were sitting.



"When are you going to blow the froth off, Cynthia?" he asked.

"Not just yet, Guy," she answered. "At all events, where are we steering for?"

"Port Sonita, Miss," the chauffeur answered. "The Colonel wants to take more petrol aboard, though as a matter of fact there's enough in the tank to carry us all round Jura."

"I'll swear that isn't the Port Sonita light," said Guy. "I think it must be the shooting-box. Go and tell him, Cynthia."

Cynthia groped her way forward. "Uncle, dear," she said smoothly, "that isn't the Port Sonita light. It really isn't. You are steering quite wrong."

Cynthia, however, was just about as

promptly dismissed as Guy would have been, and on they went, the light drawing steadily nearer. It looked not a hundred yards off when suddenly they grounded, that is to say, the

boat pulled up with a smooth, oily motion.

on. We can land here!" shouted the Colonel, and before Guy could gasp out, "For Heaven's sake

be careful, sir," the Colonel was overboard, floundering over the intervening stretch of shore towards the group of rocks that looked not thirty feet away. If ever there was a land-lubber's trick that was one, for though the Colonel had landed on a bed of weed, he was up to his knees before he had taken five strides, and was sinking rapidly in the black, clinging clay. They heard his shout of warning to them not to follow, then two words which bore in

their tone something of human extremity
—"I'm sinking!"

Thus, in the twinkling of an eye, an atmosphere of tragedy had dawned, for everyone along that coast knew and feared the black clays, with their clinging death. Here and there about the rocky headlands the treacherous patches lay, and the Colonel, imagining that he was landing on sound sand, had struck one of those patches.

"Heavens!" muttered Evans, and Cynthia caught her hands. "Oh, Guy—the clay!" she exclaimed.

They could see nothing of what was happening out there; only the twinkling blackness, with its outlines, which seemed veritably to darken as they looked, and the

gruesome sounds made by the Colonel as he struggled desperately in the quagmire.

"Hold on, Uncle! I'm coming!" shouted Guy. "Lie down if you are sinking!"

The answer was immediate. "Don't come, Guy! It's hopeless! I'm up to the middle already!"

"Here, take this and show a light!" said Guy, handing his flashlamp to Cynthia. "Get hold of the rope, Evans, and be ready to throw it."

Overboard he went, taking the long boathook with him. He managed to reach his uncle's side, but no more. He, too, was up to the knees and unable to stir another foot. Alongside him was the boathook, which lay level across the mud.

"Here you are, Uncle," he said. "Put your weight on it. Don't trample, for Heaven's sake! Just put your weight on the boat-hook and keep still."

The elder man obeyed. He was breathing

heavily.

"Heave out that rope, Evans," Guy shouted, and a moment later it fell along-side, splashing in the mud. "That's it, Uncle," Guy went on. "Give it a couple of half-hitches. Now don't try to walk. Just lie down and let them drag you. Heave there! Heave, ahoy!"

They heaved as never before in their lives, Cynthia and the chauffeur lying back with their full weight; but it seemed an

eternity ere they managed to uproot the Colonel, who came out with a loud sucking noise. Remembering his instructions, he allowed himself to be dragged, and in a few seconds they had him safely alongside and aboard.

"The boy!" he gasped, as he staggered in, dripping liquid mud everywhere. "Be

quick now! Here you are, Guy."

Away whisked the rope again, by

Away whisked the rope again, but Guy, who was sitting on the boat-hook, came out comparatively easily, and so the sudden sense of horror and dismay ceased as abruptly as a Highland thunderstorm. They even laughed, but it was a half-hearted laugh. In any case, they were on the clays till the rising tide would float them off.

"Well, thank goodness that's over!" said the Colonel shortly. He stumped aft, and they heard him groping in the locker. Then followed a sound suspiciously like the drawing of a cork from the neck of a bottle. "Good health, Uncle!" called Cynthia.

There was a pause, then the Colonel bawled back: "Here's health to the whole unholy brotherhood of land-lubbers! There are some brave men among them, anyway! Chins up, Guy!"

"Chins up, Uncle!" repeated Guy, and as he said it he felt Cynthia's sharp elbow

in his ribs.

"And you are the boy who didn't want to die in the mud!" she mocked him.

TAFFY.

Our dustbin's full, nay more, it's overflowing;
The dustman will not call; he says he's going
To—something dreadful. Shortly after eight,
The postman whistles at the garden gate;
He won't come down the drive. In thin-soled slippers
I sally forth, leaving my toast and kippers,
And gather up the letters. (No denying
That when it rains I find it rather trying.)
The lawn is mostly holes; the paintwork's scratched
On every door; the hen that should have hatched
A brood last week has vanished from our ken;
A neighbour's maid to-night at half-past ten
Called for their cat. Still, why complain and grouse?
It cheers one up,—a dog about the house.

JOE WALKER.

SPORTING EFFORT

By GARNETT RADCLIFFE

ILLUSTRATED BY LINDSAY CABLE

TOT even Miss Milton, who possessed the unenviable reputation of having the sharpest tongue and of being the most critical of all the old cats who abounded in the neighbourhood of Tauncesby (the Tauncesby with an "e," not the other place), could deny that the Darletons were a delightful young couple. Hugh Darleton had been a Regular, had served with distinction in France and Mespot, and had been invalided out of the Service with a game leg and the rank of captain. Stella, who was Irish, was as wild and charming, impulsive and generous as an Irish Stella ought to be. So, following the example of old Miss Milton, the cream of Tauncesby society left their cards at Bowersdale, which was the name of the ramshackle old place. rented by the Darletons, and generally received them with open arms.

The first winter all went well. Darletons hunted and danced, entertained modestly, and entered into all the Tauncesby amusements with zest. But at the beginning of the following summer vague rumours began to fly about. Hugh's hunters suddenly disappeared. The Morris Cowley was sold and was not replaced. A groom was dismissed, and the three original domestics dwindled to one char. from the village. Stella's frocks became pathetically familiar, even to the men; the women wondered among themselves if she really had only one hat. At last Hugh himself gave the show away to Major Kirkwood one day, when they were walking over the latter's land in the hope of potting a rabbit.

"Wonder you don't get another car, Darleton," the Major had said. All the country gossip had drifted unheeded past his ears.

Hugh laughed. There was more of bitterness than of merriment in the sound.

"Major," he said, "I imagine that you're about the one person in the county who hasn't seen that I'm absolutely stony. I'm not in debt, thank Heaven, but I haven't the foggiest idea how we're going to carry on in Bowersdale. I'm not kicking -it's all my own fault, and I know how to take my medicine. It's rough lines on Stella, though."

The Major aimed at a white scut bobbing through the stubble, fired and missed. Then he jerked out the case and blew down the barrel.

"You seemed prosperous enough when you came here first," he said. "Tell me about it."

"Bad management," Hugh grunted. was fool enough to think I could make horsebreeding and farming pay. Now I find I can't. The devil of it is that I've sunk my gratuity and every bit of capital I could lay my hands on in the farm. Stella's marriage settlement went also. Now we've come a cropper. Hanged if I can see what's ahead!"

"There's one to the right, just under the gorse bush," whispered the Major. "Got him! Good shot!"

But he was not so unsympathetic and unheeding as he seemed. Four days later his gardener came over to Bowersdale with a note for Hugh. It read as follows:

DEAR DARLETON,

Re our chat on Tuesday, I've just heard of a job in this neighbourhood that might suit you. Peters, the secretary of the Tauncesby golf and tennis club, has had to resign on account of ill health. Why not have a shot at taking his place? The screw is £600 a year, and the work is light. They want a fellow who is a sahib and who can play games, so I think you might suit.

husband!

him then to be unbounded wealth.

night Stella could not sleep, because her

little head was full of thoughts of the

glorious new hat that was to be hers. Surely the General could not refuse this splendid

If you think it worth trying go and see General Matthews. He runs the show. Good luck.

J. KIRKWOOD.

"Six hundred a year!" cried Stella with eyes like moonstones. "Hugh, you simply must get it."

must get it." "I shall get it," Hugh declared. "First

thing to-morrow off I pop to tackle old Matthews. Think what it means, Stella! We could easily hang on here whether the farm paid or not."

"And perhaps I might afford a new hat,"

Stella said wistfully.

"Rather. You shall have one for every day in the year." Hugh spoke with confidence, for six hundred a year seemed to Next morning Hugh borrowed the blacksmith's bicycle and trundled off into Tauncesby. Pedalling down the main street of that one-horse country town his eye was caught by a plumed creation in the window of the one and only hat-shop that the place boasted. It was the sort of monstrosity that any sane woman would rather be found dead in a ditch than be seen wearing; but to Hugh's masculine eyes it was a beautiful new hat and nothing else. It would suit Stella down to the ground—there could be no doubt about it. On the spur of the moment he dismounted, went into the shop, and asked what its price might be.

"Thirty shillings," said the proprietress, who hated the sight of the abortion and would have been glad to get rid of it at

"They put vigour into those singles, and Hugh was relieved to find that, despite his game leg, he could get about the court with his old agility."

any price. "Shall I do it up for you, sir?"

"Keep it for me, will you? I'll be passing again in a day or two. Good morning."

"Good morning, sir," beamed the woman,

but she shook her head as she watched him mount and ride away. Such a nicespoken young gentleman—but his taste in hats! "Got a grudge against his wife," she thought to herself.

When Hugh came back to Bowersdale he found Stella pretending to read a newspaper.

"Any luck?" she asked in an off-hand voice that did not deceive him in the

least.

don't know vet." Hugh limped across the room and began to fill his pipe. "There's another fellow called Norton up for the job, and he's the nephew of one of the shareholders. According old Matthews there is nothing to choose between us. so he says it will have to be decided by a trial au combat."

"A trial au combat?" Stella echoed.

"Yes. A tennis single, three sets, and the winner of the rubber becomes secretary. Apparently this fellow Norton is hot stuff, played for the 'Varsity. I shall have my work cut out."

Stella bounded to her feet.

"How abominably unfair! Doesn't the General know that you are lame? Didn't you tell him?"

Hugh shook his

"I thought it was rather sporting of

him to give me the chance. And, without boasting, I believe that I can give Norton a good game. I used to be fairly useful."

"When does the match come off?" Stella asked.

"This day week. That will give me time

to practise."

Being a single-minded sort of person, Hugh set about the business with thoroughness. Every morning he spent hours in driving a ball against the back wall of Bowersdale, and taking it on the half-volley as it came back. It was expensive on the windows, but it served to get his eye in. In the afternoons Stella and he played hard singles on the court which Major Kirkwood kindly lent for the purpose. They put vigour into those singles, and Hugh was relieved to find that, despite his game leg, he could get about the court with almost his old agility. And as his confidence increased a glorious picture began to form at the back of his brain. It was one of himself presenting Stella with that lovely new hat, saying proudly, "I've won." gloated to himself over the thought of how surprised and pleased she would be. The idea of defeat never entered his head. so much at stake he couldn't lose.

At last the great morning arrived, sunny, but not too hot, the very day for tennis. Stella insisted that Hugh should eat her boiled egg as well as his own, declaring that he must keep up his stamina. And as Hugh reluctantly accepted the sacrifice (there is a degree of poverty when a boiled egg is a very real sacrifice indeed), he vowed that she should have the new hat and all it implied, even if he had to burst a bloodvessel. It was in the spirit of a Sir Galahad going to do battle for his Lady that he mounted the blacksmith's bicycle and rode off down the sunlit road.

"Best of luck, old thing," was how the

lady sped her knight.

"The off pedal's wonky; hope it doesn't let me down," was what the knight replied; but all the same the real spirit of chivalry was there.

It had been arranged that the match was to be played on a private court, and that General Matthews was to be the only spectator. Luke, the club marker, was to umpire. Hugh was the last to arrive, and he found the General and his opponent awaiting him in the pavilion. The General introduced the rivals and muttered some remarks about hoping to see a good game, and this being the fairest way of settling a difficult problem.

Hugh's first impressions of Norton were not favourable. He was a tall, sallow young man with an immensely condescending manner. Very plainly he showed that he considered the match was all tosh and that he, as nephew of the club's most important shareholder, should have been at once preferred to a penniless soldier. The General, however, was something of an autocrat in matters relating to the club, and what he said went.

"Spin for ends," Hugh suggested. "You call?"

"I suggest that we leave the spinning to the umpire," said Norton. "Some racquets have a habit of always turning up the side the owner wants."

Hugh gasped. That was a direct implication that he intended to cheat! There was a slight flush upon his sunburnt cheek as he followed Norton to the court. More than ever he was resolved that he would win

or perish in the attempt.

In the end Norton won the toss and chose the best side. Hugh took service. From sheer nervousness he gave away the first three points by serving double faults. Then he steadied himself and actually got one right. Norton got to it, but sent his return into the net, thereby showing that his nerves were as strained as Hugh's. After that they settled down and began really to play. The first set, in which the play generally was of the rabbity order, relieved by bursts of brilliance, Norton won by six games to four.

In the second Hugh found his real form. Noticing that Norton had a nasty habit of slamming almost untakable drives against his back-hand, which was the heel of Achilles, he started rushing to the net. These tactics paid, for Norton lost his head and only succeeded in winning three games. General Matthews, a lonely figure in the stand, clapped his hands as they changed over for the final. It was easy to see that his sympathies lay with the soldier.

The last set was begun at a tremendous pace, both men putting all they knew into their play. Hugh was beginning to feel twinges from his wounded leg, but in his exultation he hardly noticed them, for he felt that he had taken Norton's measure and, barring accidents, was sure to win. By hard drives, admirably placed and with a fast top spin, he kept his opponent racing from side to side of the back line, until he himself could rush to the net and kill a weak return with a well-directed smash. But what luck there was seemed to favour Norton. Despite Hugh's whirlwind attacks. he brought off a series of flukes until the score stood at five games all. The match

would now go to the man who first took two

games running.

After an interminable series of "deuce" and "vantages" Norton took the sixth game. It was now Hugh's service, and with the thought of Stella to nerve his arm he made the effort of his life. The first three points were taken by unplayable serves—cannon balls that pitched in the very corner of the service court and shot like lightning. One more and he had saved the game. He sent it over with the force of a kicking mule, and had the satisfaction of seeing Norton fail to even touch it.

"Fault," called out Luke.

Hugh stared. He was as certain as one ever can be certain of anything in this uncertain world that the ball had pitched a good six inches within the line. But it would be the worst of sportsmanship to question the umpire's decision. Setting his teeth, he served again, with more delibera-This time there could be no mistake, for it pitched in the very centre of the service court, and Norton punished it as it deserved with a savage fore-arm drive. Hugh returned with difficulty, and a sharp rally followed. At last, seizing his opportunity, Hugh raced to the net and smashed a return. With a tremendous effort Norton reached it and lobbed. The ball passed high above Hugh's head, so he turned and raced it to the back line.

"Out!" he cried as it alighted.

Norton turned to the umpire. "How was it?" he asked.

"Quite right," Luke said after a percep-

tible pause. "Score, forty-thirty."

Then Hugh lost his head. Unless he was to disbelieve the evidence of his own eyes, the lob had pitched a good foot outside the court. There might have been a shadow of doubt about the service; hard serves were difficult to judge. But this! He wondered if General Matthews had noticed what had occurred. Then he remembered that the old man was very short-sighted, and would never dream of questioning the umpire's decision.

"Hurry up," Norton cried. "I can't stay

here all day."

A double fault, which, if the truth must be told, was due to Hugh's extreme annoyance, brought the score to deuce. The next point fell to him after a rally that seemed to last for hours. It was now 'vantage in. Setting his teeth, Hugh sent over a serve that might have given a Lenglen cause to think. Norton reached it and

returned weakly. Hugh treated the ball as it deserved. With a powerful fore-arm drive he sent the ball skimming across the court. It alighted dead on the corner where the single-court line met the back line and kicked up a little cloud of whitewash.

"No doubt about that one," Hugh thought, but then to his amazement he heard Luke call, "Out. Score deuce."

"I say!" Hugh protested. "Surely it was on the line! It knocked up some whitewash."

· Norton shook his head.

"A good two inches out," he declared. "Hard luck."

Hugh forced himself to grin and apologise, but there was cold fury in his heart as he picked up the balls and prepared to serve again. He saw clearly enough that he was not going to be allowed to win. For some unfathomable reason Luke was deliberately cheating against him. Cheating! In a game like this, where such great issues were at stake!

Another five minutes saw the end of the set that gave Norton the victory and the coveted secretaryship. And in each of the last two points the marker deliberately gave umpire decisions against Hugh. The first time he shouted that a serve that had left Norton standing had been a "let," and the second he gave another of Hugh's returns as being out, although it was obviously in.

At the end General Matthews hobbled down from the stand to congratulate the winner.

"It was a fine, hard game," he said.
"Darleton, you're looking fagged! Come

and have a drink."

"No thank you, sir." Hugh found his coat and hurried off. He feared that if he had to stay and listen to Norton's patronising description of the game he might lose his control, and say or do something violent. Had it been a fair beating from a superior player he could have taken his disappointment with a grin. But to be cheated like this!

Passing through the main street of Tauncesby something caught his eye. It was the new hat that he had intended to present to Stella. Poor old Stella! So she, too, was to be done down by that confounded cheat! "I'm hanged if she will," Hugh thought, and applied his brakes with a violence that caused the back wheel to skid in the dust. Then, careless of curious on-

lookers, he dismounted and strode into a pawn-shop. From the pawn-shop he went to the hat-shop. Two minutes later a band-

Hugh's face. It was not the look of a conqueror. When he entered she was on her knees, immensely busy doing something to the grate.

"Hullo, old boy! I should think you're

box was dangling from his handle-bars, and the hat-shop was richer by an unexpected thirty shillings. But Hugh's racquet was no longer in his hand, and his watch was no longer on his wrist. They had provided the "Anxiously watched by Hugh, she went through the mysterious price of the new hat. Stella, who had spent the mornrites practised by women who are ing on tenter-hooks, peeped from trying on new hats. a window to watch her knight's When she beheld the return. bandbox her little heart went tired out." Her voice was almost pit-a-pat with sudden delight, but then she noticed the grey, drawn look on

too casual.

"Pretty fagged." Hugh flopped into a chair with a grunt of relief. "Fraid I've let you down, Stella. Norton's won and

he gets the job. I've bought you a new hat to make up." His laugh did not ring quite true.

In a flash Stella was beside him. Her arms were round his neck, and she was comforting her disgruntled knight, as only the Stellas of the world know how. After

being beaten, and suggested that she should try on the new hat.

Together they opened the bandbox. The squeak that Stella gave when she beheld the contents might have been of delight, or it might have been of something else. Then, anxiously watched by Hugh, she



an interval, Hugh blew his nose with some violence, said he didn't care a straw about

went through the mysterious rites practised by women who are trying on new hats. "Sure you like it?" Hugh asked at last.

"Like isn't the word," said Stella. "It's exactly what I should have chosen myself. How clever you are!" And I think that was one of the lies which will go down on

the right side of the ledger.

That evening Hugh went carefully through his accounts. The result was not reassuring. By exercising the utmost economy they might hang on for another two months, but then what? He had had no training for clerical work, and his game leg precluded him from the chance of outdoor work of any nature. Even enlisting was barred. It was a black outlook. The next few days were spent in answering advertisements in the newspapers. The answers showed clearly how little value a lame, ex-regular officer who couldn't even typewrite was in the business world. And neither he nor Stella had a relation who would be able or willing to help!

At last he went to seek the advice of Major Kirkwood. To him he stated his position, and asked what in the world he

was to do?

"Don't stand on my tulip bed," said the Major, who was clipping a hedge in his garden. Then, after chopping away in silence for a few minutes, he said:

"Why the deuce did you let that young Norton beat you the other day? Matthews told me that you suddenly went off your game at the end. He is as sick about it as I am, for young Norton seems to have a knack of putting people's backs up."

Hugh shrugged his shoulders. He was in no mood to discuss Norton's character. And not being a malicious person he did not intend to explain his defeat by giving the real reason.

"Case of the best man won, I suppose," he said.

"Pruning seems to make this hedge thinner instead of thicker," remarked the Major, whose thought-processes were not always easy to follow. "Look here, Darleton, would you care to make up a men's four with me at the club on Thursday? Bring Stella. She can talk to my wife while we're playing. I'll run you over in the car. . . "

Hugh was on the point of refusing when he suddenly remembered that it would be an opportunity for Stella to wear her new hat. She hadn't gone out in it yet, for she had said that it must be kept for best occasions. Surely an afternoon at the club would be a fitting début!

"Right you are," he said. "What time?"

"Pick you up at two."

Hugh, realising that he would have to wait until the hedge was finished before he could have the serious talk he had come for, turned to go. Then another thought struck him.

"Could you lend me a racquet? I've

er—left mine in a shop."

"With pleasure if you'll get off my tulip bed," said the Major, clicking his shears.

Rather to Hugh's surprise, his wife displayed no great enthusiasm when he told her that on Thursday afternoon she was to have the chance of parading the glories of the new hat before the élite of Tauncesby. At first she said that she'd rather go in her old one, alleging the following reasons: 1. That the new hat was much too grand for a tennis party. 2. That she hadn't a frock to live up to it. 3. That it might rain. When, however, she saw the disappointment on Hugh's face she relented and said that she would wear it.

"Mrs. Kirkwood and I will go for a walk by the river while you're playing," she declared, and at the same time she made a mental resolve that she would remove the atrocity before facing tea on the club balcony. But she wasn't going to hurt

Hugh's feelings. . . .

So it came to pass that while Hugh was wielding a borrowed racquet in the centre court, Stella and the Major's wife were strolling along the tow-path by the side of the river that flowed through the club grounds. It was a swift river and a deep Stella noted with appreciation the way that a heavy branch was whirled along its surface until it disappeared over a fall in a smother of foam. It so happened that at that instant a drooping plume from the monstrosity upon her head blew into her eyes and tickled her cheek. An idea flashed into her mind. Now or never was the time to rid herself of the horror. It would be an accident. Hugh need never know. . . .

"Stone in my shoe," she said suddenly, stopping and bending down. Mrs. Kirkwood walked on a few paces. She had her back turned. Next instant the hat was floating merrily down-stream. . . .

"Oh, your hat's blown off!" cried the Major's wife, and she made futile dabs with her walking-stick as it flashed past.

"Well, we can't get it now," Stella cried. Let's go back and watch the tennis. It's no use crying over spilt milk." But they had not been the sole witnesses of the catastrophe. Farther down-stream a small boy with a fishing-rod twice as long as himself had noticed what had happened. And to his eyes, even as to Hugh's, the hat looked both beautiful and costly, well worth retrieving. Intent on salvage, he leaned far out from the bank. Another inch and the fishing-rod would have touched it. . . . Then there was a yell and a loud splash, and he had joined the hat on its rapid course towards the fall.

After that things happened with kaleidoscopic quickness. Before she realised what all the fuss was about Mrs. Kirkwood saw Stella sprint along the tow-path, enter the river with a running dive, and swim towards the terrified child, her strong young arms flashing in and out of the water in a powerful "trudgeon." Mrs. Kirkwood found her voice. Loud and long she screamed, and from the direction of the tennis courts men in flannels came at the double. They didn't stop to ask questions—they acted. A chain was formed and strong hands pulled Stella and the child to the safety of the bank. In another half-minute they would both have gone over the fall and on to the boulders ten feet below. . . .

It was Luke, the marker, who snatched the yelling urchin from Stella's arms.

"Yours?" Stella inquired from the depths of the great-coat which one of the rescuers had flung round her shoulders.

"Yes, ma'am." The marker's face was working queerly and he seemed to find difficulty in speaking. "He's our only child. If he'd been drowned..." He stopped and choked. "I don't know how to thank you," he added huskily.

"Oh, that's all right," Stella said awkwardly. She had a genuine horror of any display of emotion. "Hullo, here's Hugh! I'll race you to the club, Hugh; the sooner I get into dry togs the better. . . ."

"Did you really care for the hat as much as all that?" Hugh asked as he pounded beside her. He had arrived at the tail end of the incident, and had only heard Mrs. Kirkwood's garbled account of what had happened.

"Well, there was a child also," Stella

admitted, "but the hat fell in first."

And to this day, whenever the subject of women's hats arises, Hugh enlarges upon the perfect specimen that he once chose for his wife.

"She liked it so much that she risked her life to save it," he declares.

The sequel to the adventure came that evening. It was about seven o'clock when the telephone-bell at Bowersdale rang and Hugh, going to answer it, found that General Matthews was at the other end.

"That you, Darleton? Look here, that fellow Norton is leaving. Would you care to take on the job of club secretary?"

"Rather," Hugh bellowed. Then he added, "Why is Norton giving up?"

"Because of something that Luke has just told me. It seems that Norton got hold of him before the match and offered him ten pounds to umpire so that you didn't win. . . Luke's wife was ill and he was short of money, so he accepted. . . . When your wife saved his kiddle he felt he had to confess. . . I've given the poor devil a good dressing-down, but am keeping him on—he's a first-class marker, and we can't afford to lose him. . . Norton has to go though. . . . He was an all-round scoundrel. . . . Hullo! Hullo, I say. . . ." But then he had to ring off, for Hugh had rushed hot-foot to tell Stella the glorious

"And just think, darling," he said to her, "it is all indirectly due to that hat!"

"Bless it!" said Stella.



THE WILES OF SMUGGLERS •



A CAREFULLY MOULDED TIN WHICH WAS WORN ROUND THE BODY OF A SMUGGLER.

HE records of smuggling and smug glers are so full

glers are so full of incident and adventure that glamour surrounds the mere name. The wiles of the fraternity are so diverse and ingenious that the most incredible stories invented by 'writers of fiction have probably been matched in reality in the unceasing battle of wits between the authorities and the evaders of taxes.

Whatever other forms of business may be rising or falling, that carried on by smugglers is increasing rapidly in the

By CHAS. J. L. CLARKE

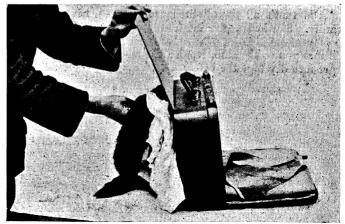
Photographs by the Author

British Isles, as in many other parts of the world. With modern appliances, such as motor-cars, motor-launches and flying machines, offering formerly unknown facilities for the rapid transference of goods, much is going on of which the average citizen hears little.

The few reports which find their way into the newspapers give no idea of the ingenuity and recklessness with which the amazing efforts to defeat the Prohibition laws are conducted.

Neither side desires publicity, but the battle behind the scenes is not the less strenuous.

It is in the main a battle of wits rather than a mêlée of swinging sticks, steel and firearms, but the penalties exacted are such that we can scarcely wonder that reckless men are liable to "see red" and put up a



DOUBLE ATTACHÉ CASE WITH CONCEALED SECTION OPENED BY DRAWING A SLIDE.

fight which may end in serious physical injuries or death.

Smuggling comes under the heading of "Offences against trade." The fact that a man is a known smuggler does not in itself lay him open to trouble. Like his poorer brother the poacher he can saucily pass the time of day with officers of the police without fear of interference.

Whether it is the sporting instinct of mankind, the chance of cheap goods, or inborn resentment against gatherers of taxes in general, it is a fact that, broadly speaking, people generally are more in sympathy with the smugglers than with the customs men, though there are always informers who secretly convey information to the authorities for a consideration.

It must be admitted that such an attitude does more credit to the hearts of the people than to their heads, for money must be found for the upkeep of civilized government, and the Exchequer has to raise by taxes on other things any amount that is lost by evasion of the proper duties. People who tolerate or connive at the activities of smugglers are simply agreeing to be debited with sums properly payable by these romantic and daring gentry.

In the past clergymen and leading citizens have not hesitated to secure the release of smugglers committed to prison for failure to pay the demands of the authorities. And how many to-day would withhold hand or friendship from persons just because they have smuggled a few cigars or a silk blouse past the barriers?

Human nature being what it is, it may be taken that whenever and wherever there



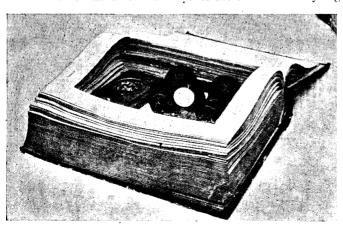
AN INGENIOUS DOUBLE SKIRT WHICH FORMED A GIANT POCKET, AND IN THE DAYS OF LONG SKIRTS ENABLED CONTRABAND TO BE CONCEALED.

are customs duties there will be smuggling or attempted smuggling.

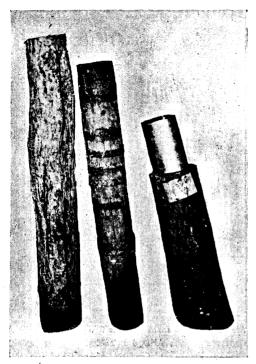
In recent times—until the last few years—import duties have in most cases not been sufficient to stimulate smuggling, certainly not to the extent of "running cargoes" on solitary parts of the coast, but with the increase, both in the number of articles on which duty is imposed and the amount charged, there is little doubt that on dark and stormy nights, and when fog lies thick

on the waters, mysterious boats from foreign ports make, or attempt to make, a landing whenever opportunity offers.

That this is possible, although modern life has left a diminishing number of solitary places, was shown by the recent case of a foreigner who landed in Great Britain from a small sailing vessel unknown to the authorities and appeared at a public meeting, without having submitted to formalities of a passport examination.



A DECEPTIVE BOOK: THE CENTRE CUT AWAY TO FORM A RECEPTACLE FOR SMUGGLED GOODS.



HOLLOW LOGS THAT WERE USED TO CONCEAL CONTRABAND DRUGS, ETC.

The duty of preventing unauthorized landings of men or material used to be carried out by the Coastguard, a wonderful body of men who had served in the Navy, but some years ago their work, as regards smuggling, was transferred to revenue officers and the force reduced. It is prob-

ably a sign of the times that an increase in the number of the Coastguard is now being made.

It is, in fact, more important now than ever that "undutied" goods should be seized on the coast, because, once landed, swift motor-cars facilitate the "get-away" to an amazing extent, and the fact that many people turn night into day, and race across country through the darkness in private cars, or haul merchandise on the roads by night as well as by day, offers immense possibilities for getting rid of contraband cargoes,

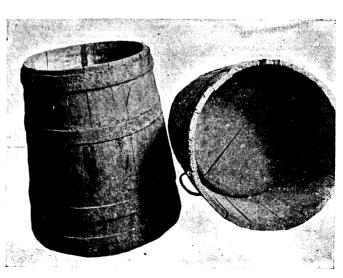
once they have been successfully loaded on to motor vehicles.

In the old days the chances of detection were many. The light horsed carts could only bring the goods a short distance inland, and some convenient caché, in country halls or concealed caves, had to be arranged, where the goods could lie until darkness made it possible to move them to places nearer to the big towns, until they eventually entered the stream of legitimate trade through the warehouses. A few hours now suffice to bring heavy loads directly from the coast to the avenues of everyday commerce.

It is not in the interests of the community that the beginnings of up-to-date methods should be disclosed, but the revenue men are alive to the possibilities, and have observed "straws in the wind" which, while they may be developments of legitimate business, may be deflected to other purposes. It adds to the difficulties of the situation that the wily ones often carry on a comparatively open business to mask their illegal traffic.

A firm was importing boilers from Rotterdam, and the heavy metal imports excited no comment. One day, however, the customs officers inspected one of the boilers and discovered that they were in reality made of very light metal, and were loaded inside with tobacco. An enormous penalty was exacted and the traffic stopped.

In another case a barge was unloading oilcake for cattle from a Dutch port. Some of it had already been carted away, when by



FALSE BOTTOMS HAVE LONG BEEN A FAVOURITE DEVICE.

the merest fluke a customs officer, who was watching the unloading, discovered that the oil-cake was in reality compressed tobacco stalk and rough tobacco, used for snuff. The carts were pursued, the whole cargo confiscated, and heavy penalties inflicted.

One great help to the customs officers is the persistence with which smugglers practise a particular method, until eventually observant officials decide to investigate the reason.

At a port on the south-east coast a member of the crew of a small trading vessel was apparently of so studious a turn that he brought a book ashore, carelessly tucked under his arm, to while away his spare time. Unfortunately for him he never came ashore without a book, and his persistent thirst for knowledge at last attracted the attention of a customs officer, with the result that the book was found to have the inner part of the leaves cut away, leaving a considerable cavity within which dutiable articles were packed.

Dogs played an important part in dodging the revenue officers in the middle of last century. Dutiable goods were shipped to Belgium and introduced into France in large quantities. Each dog could carry about £50 worth, and so popular did this method of smuggling become that a reward was given for each dog seized. This resulted in considerable slaughter among the innocent



THIS CARRIAGE CUSHION CONTAINED TWENTY LITRES OF BRANDY.



A COLLAR ROUND A HORSE'S NECK HAS BEEN USED TO CONCEAL CONTRABAND.

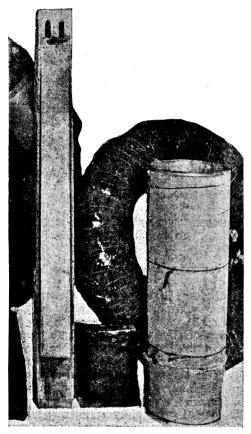
canine smugglers, and put a stop to their

Precious stones have always been subject to smuggling, both across frontiers and from the mines and workings in which they are found. Native workers are amazingly cunning in this form of smuggling, and because of their scanty clothing make various parts of their bodies receptacles for gems when passing from the workings. Swallowing was a favourite method, the natives cheerfully braving the possibility of internal trouble in their efforts to make a haul. One native who had long been under suspicion was eventually found to have produced a cavity in the lobe of his ear, which had been of the utmost value for this purpose.

An enterprising "trader" frequently crossed one of the Continental frontiers on quite legitimate business. The customs officers became aware that he was dealing in dutiable gems, but for long were at a loss to discover his method of concealment. The closest scrutiny of his belongings failed to throw light on the matter, and he might have outwitted the authorities for good and all but for a strangely opportune accident at the frontier station one day, when he

caught the heel of his boot against an upstanding cobble-stone, with the result that the heel was knocked off, disclosing a cavity from which a number of gems rolled. The resulting penalties put a permanent stop to his activities.

Women have always been inveterate smugglers, and many amusing tales are told of the wrath displayed by them when detected. Tears of desperation have been shed in buckets on the stony floors of examining



A MOTOR TYRE, A ROLL OF FELT, A HOLLOW SASH FRAME AND AN OLD PETROL CAN, ALL OF WHICH WERE USED BY SMUGGLERS.

sheds. Caught in the act, the alternative is presented of paying the duty demanded, or, if persistent smuggling is not suspected, of abandoning the goods to the Customs and losing the price paid for them. Protests and tears produce from the officers nothing but a twinkle of the eye as they watch the embarrassment and hear the falsehoods designed to rescue the fair ones from a heart-rending predicament.

Customs men have a wonderful eye for

size and dimensions and many are the ingenious receptacles which have been confiscated because of a discrepancy between exterior and interior.

A week-end bag, in the popular attaché form, attracted the notice of an observant officer and he made a rapid mental estimate of its depth. While running through the contents he calculated the depth of the interior, and somehow the figures did not tally. He produced a rule and measured the outside depth of the bag, an action which upset the control of the owner, who took to his heels in panic; he was brought back, and, seeing that the game was up, disclosed a beautifully fitting slide which formed the opening to a twin receptacle at the bottom of the bag, which, needless to say, contained dutiable goods.

In an interesting collection of smugglers' devices in Paris there is a range of tubs each fitted with a false bottom, which were used to defeat the octroi duty levied at the Some nicely formed tin containers filled with liquor passed the gates for a time around the body of a smuggler. But one day a collector was struck with a certain incongruity between the rotund figure and the normal face, and the cause of the mystery was divulged. It would be easier to enumerate the things which have not been used to avoid the Paris octroi duty than to tabulate those that have; one might begin to think that this is indeed a hollow world.

The collar round a horse's neck and the cushioned seat on which the driver sat were found to have cunningly contrived chambers, inside which contraband goods were concealed. Sash frames on a builder's cart, logs of firewood, apparently just cut from the woods, rolls of felt, petrol tins and motor tyres, all have been unearthed and confiscated by the watchful officers at the gates.

A motor-car used to drive through the gates of Paris regularly, with a couple of men seated on the front. One day the car collided with a cart and the shock threw both men into the roadway. One lay apparently lifeless and the people around rushed to his assistance, among them the octroi officer. Imagine his surprise when he found that the unfortunate motorist was a cleverly arranged "dummy," inside which a store of dutiable articles had been packed. The motorist who had been driving made a hasty retreat, and by the time the unfortunate "dummy" had been revealed was nowhere to be seen.

The device of a clever smuggler of watches was never discovered during his lifetime, and he must have amassed a fortune by his immunity. One day he slipped in boarding a ship and sank like a stone. It was not surprising, for when the body was recovered it was found to be laden with valuable watches, concealed in a heavy belt, which stood away from the man's stomach, and formed the inlet to a pocket arrangement which surrounded the lower part of the body.

In these days of growing tariffs the revenue officers keep up-to-date in every means of detection. An electrical appliance makes it possible to see right through a bale of goods.

If we include under the head of smuggling all means of avoiding the payment of revenue duties, there are many instances of illicit distilleries, especially in Ireland.

It got around that a run was to be made in a certain desolate and boggy locality, and plans were laid to effect a capture.

Just after midnight the watchful officers espied a dim lantern light making its way along the track across the bog, and a stealthy pursuit began. But however they quickened their steps they could not gain on the dim light which was leading them along the rough path. Farther and farther they followed into the desolate waste, until the light seemed to cut off at right angles to the path, and to travel directly into the treacherous bog. Desperate, the revenue men, throwing caution to the winds, charged along the path, searching for the by-path along which the smugglers must have gone, and which would, no doubt, lead to a secret distillery or store of undutied spirits. their dismay they could not find a sign of the path upon which they were convinced that the smugglers must have gone. Fearing to trust themselves to the open bog, they had the mortification of seeing the dimly lighted lantern finally disappear.

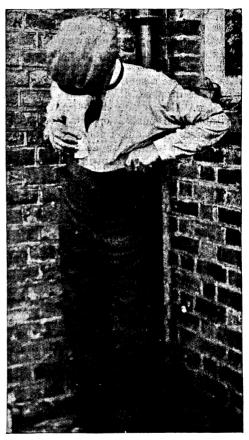
There was more than a suspicion of a twinkle in the eyes of the various "gossips" who told the discomfited officers that they "had heard" that a large and profitable run had been made at the appointed time from a locality only a few miles away.

Customs officers, next to income-tax collectors, are the most tenacious creatures in existence, and they did not rest from their efforts to discover the mystery of the elusive lamp. Untiring search by daylight failed to reveal any sign of path or track at the spot where the light took to the open bog, although they discovered that the light must

have passed over a very treacherous part of the bog, including a deep pit.

For a time they nursed their wrath, which was not lessened by the knowledge that, had they been incautious enough to follow the light across the bog, they might well have lost their lives.

Many uncomfortable nights were spent by individual officers in selected spots, each and all being sworn to solve the mystery. One night, when darkness could be felt and



THIS BELT CONCEALED WATCHES AND JEWELLERY CARRIED BY A CONTINENTAL SMUGGLER.

a fog was gathering, an officer, who had made his way into the bog, felt his pulse tingle as he saw a dim light emerge from the gloom. Breathlessly he waited, with rifle ready, until the light turned towards the open bog, then he let go a lucky shot, for he saw the light dance and fall.

With some trepidation he made his way cautiously to the spot, and there on the bogland track he found a large Irish water spaniel, with a small lantern strapped to his head. The mystery of the elusive lamp was solved, much to the satisfaction of the revenue hunters, and to the secret amusement of the wily "boys" who had been

responsible for it.

There are fashions in smuggling, as in everything else. A short time ago saccharine was a favourite article among smugglers. On one occasion a woman of foreign extraction was suspected of bringing large quantities into this country. When she reached London she was closely followed by a detec-When she was among the narrow streets of the East End the officer closed up until the woman became aware that she was pursued. The officer had his own idea of where the saccharine was concealed, and when she made a sudden dart up a narrow passage he dropped all subterfuge and ran after her. Recognizing that capture was inevitable, she pushed open a door and disappeared. The officer followed, only to find that the woman in desperation had sought refuge in a small cupboard. He seized her and, throwing all ordinary considerations aside, pinched her legs. He was not amazed to find that her lower limbs were very well developed. To his satisfaction and unlimited amusement he saw his rough embrace rewarded by a trickle of white powder on to the floor. It was in the days of long skirts, when women's garments offered excellent opportunities for concealment. Large quantities of saccharine which had not gone through the formality of declaration were found and confiscated, and due punishment was meted out to the offender.

Later smuggling fashion changed to drugs, every conceivable device being employed to bring them into the country. Now silk, scent and spirits are the most popular articles

for concealment.

Women form a large proportion of the silk smugglers, especially at the cross-Chan-

nel ports and London stations. Many are well able to pay the proper dues, but, as the customs authorities put it, "whether by carelessness or dishonesty, they neglect to disclose some or all of the dutiable articles brought into the country."

The public as a whole are tolerant to smugglers, and it is not unusual to overhear sly hints or open boasts that articles have been smuggled, but the officials manage, by cunning and astuteness and the help of "informers," to gather all but a small proportion of the dues.

It is not always necessary to resort to illegal practices, and the Customs have sometimes been defeated for a time by subtle methods within the law.

There was the case of a trader who conceived the idea of drying the moisture out of tobacco, making a reduction in weight of about 40 per cent. When the tobacco had passed the Customs the leaf was exposed to moisture until it resumed its normal weight. When the authorities became aware of the practice the method of charging duty was altered so that super-drying was of no avail.

Then there was a knowing trader who imported a case of gloves through a southern port, and being unable to agree to the amount of duty left the case with the Customs. He did the same with another case at the Port of London. In due course the goods came up for sale by auction. When the gloves at the southern port were examined, prior to sale, it was discovered that they were all right-hand ones. Naturally no one wanted to buy a lot of "rights," and the sophisticated trader bought them at his own price. The London gloves were found to be all "lefts," and when this brainy business man had bought these also he was of course able to pair them up. The trader had discharged all his legal obligations, and the result was "one up" against the Revenue.



SHORT STEPS TO KNOWLEDGE

Laurence Housman

II.—HEREDITY.

Illustrated by I. Foord-Kelcey.

POOR Lydia Brown was in despair;

The reason was she had red hair.

And all the little village boys, Pointing the finger that annoys, Would follow after, and inquire "Hello! Who's got a rick on fire?"



The case was worse, though not so rude,

When she walked out in solitude; For when she crossed a field of cows, The cattle would all cease to browse; And if a bull was there at large, It instantly began to charge.





It was a most annoying fate

To live in such a dangerous state:

Yet what could poor Miss Lydia do,

Since dear Mamma had red hair too?

Though she had ways to make it pale;

And wore a bonnet and a veil.

So when her daughter in despair

Exclaimed "Why have I got red hair?"

Mamma—her mild eye flashing sparks—

Said "Don't make personal remarks!

You have no reason to repine For being born a child of mine."

But though Mamma there hits the nail—

Points moral, and adorns a tale
For childish ears—which, thus expressed,

Explains that all is for the best; The sad condition of her head Makes poor Miss Lydia to see red.



This trick—hereditary traits
To dodge—a stern Mamma surveys:
"What! shall my child her birth deny,
And flaunt a head that tells a lie!
It rains! Go out into the rain,
And pray to be made clean again!"

And so one day—what do you think?—

She goes and gets a pot of ink;

And, driven thereto by dark despair,

Into it slowly dips her hair:

Her thirsty locks drink up the dye-

The pot is large, she drains it dry.

As dark at sundown comes the mirk,

The blue-black potion did its work:

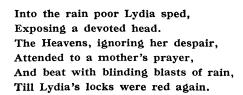
That roseate little head became

A horrid smudge of smothered flame;

And, as they dried, her tresses grew

Into a deep and purple hue.







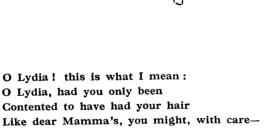
After a while, the storm abates; Mamma stands at the door and waits, And looking up and down the lane Wonders she is not back again— Sees down the road her inky track; Then, why has Lydia not come back? "Why?" she inquires, but cannot think. So, following up that track of ink, Comes to the stile, and looks across, And there—still somewhat at a loss—Gazes, until her gaze makes out The clear solution of her doubt.

For there—can she believe her eyes?— Her daughter she identifies: Her hair, though draggled, once more red, Her form familiar, but quite dead— Impaled upon a bullock's horns. Think how poor Lydia's mother mourns!

Heredity! Beneath the sun
In thy despite what deeds are
done!
How often children in their pride,

How often children in their pride, Their parents' wishes have denied, And going their own ways have learned,

Too late, the wisdom that they spurned.





By keeping strictly to the house— Have lived quite safe—avoiding cows!

Out of the Depths

ILLUSTRATED BY ABBEY

"LUST you see me now, Mayhew?"
The managing editor groped nervously among the litter on

0

"It is important," his deputy said.
"There's a young American down there in the hall who says he's going to swim the Atlantic——"

" To swim--- ? "

"The Atlantic. Quite a reckless devil, it seems. He has all the details fixed and is ready to give his life for the stars and stripes, as Lindbergh was ready to do in the air."

"But, man alive, that's three thousand

miles! It's idiotic!"

"That's what they said to the Swede. And if the 'Flying Fool' could make good, why not a 'Swimming Lunatic'? Anyhow, there's a good story in his madness."

The Chief had grown calmer, and slid back into his pocket the watch he had

drawn out with irritable hands.

"All right, Mayhew. Bring the fellow up...oh, wait! Put 'The Destiny of the United States' back on page thirteen, and leave out 'The Civil War in Ireland': we've had that for seven hundred years."

"Is it right here?" he heard presently in the meekest tone. "Or is that the door?"

"In there?" It was a modest prodigy that Mr. Mayhew was shepherding into the Presence. A short, thick-set lad sidled across the room, blue-eyed, and mildly bewildered in this busy palace of the world's noisy pulse, all marble and gold, with crimson carpets along the corridors of a holy of holies on the topmost floor. . . .

The Chief was looking through and into a very shabby caller, who stood twiddling a peaked cap and fingering the frowsy buttons of an ancient tunic much too big for him. A deck-hand was the judge's verdiet. Quite

likely off a tramp or a collier down there in the Pool below London Bridge.

"Your name?"

"Homer Joline."

"And business?"

"A noos item."

"Ah!... I understood——"

"An' that's so, Mister! I shall take to the water on Southsea beach an' climb out of Amurican surf on Coney Island."

"You mean, if you live? Why, the immersion alone would paralyse flesh and

blood-

"Not with my coatin' o' shark-proof grease... Did you bring up that can, Mister Mayhew?"

"No-it was vile stuff, and smelt like fish-

glue."

"Never mind the grease," the Chief put in here.

"I gotta mind it! It's what them savages use in the Solomon Islands. There's a kind o' creepin' heat in it——"

"Who will attend you on the swim?"

"Me brother—in a steel canoe which a torpedo couldn't sink! She c'n race or crawl, our li'l 'Beauty.' . . . Yes, sir, I'll be followed be a brother. Nobody like a brother, is they? Why, don' the Bible say——?"

"I'd far rather hear what you say!" Here the epic Homer shifted from one stout leg to the other and smiled out a "Thank

you" to his inquisitor.

"How long will the swim take?"

"Three munce, prar'bly. It's all accordin' to currents an' win's an' weather."

"H'm! One fourth of a year in the water

-night and day!"

"Yes, but in the track o' ships, Mister.

Them big, 'ooge ships."

"True! Of course you can give up the first day, if you want to." Here the defendant shook a fateful head, fixing dreamy



eyes upon a Sargent portrait of the late Lord Wendover, a titan of Fleet Street and the founder of the *Daily Budget*, whose circulation was two millions a day, even with returns and complimentary copies deducted.

"No, sir. There'll be no givin' up. I'll go down first!"

"And the man at the wheel?"

"The canoe's automatic. A touch of the lever—Psssst! An' she settles down quiet as a blue fish o' our Noo England shoals!"

"Ah!" The Chief shifted in his chair to exchange glances with his subordinate. Clearly their visitor had a soulful punch.

And this, with his mental footwork, made Round One Homer Joline's by miles.

"Now as to food. Who'll feed you on the

way ? "

"Me brother. On lamb's marrer an' coca-leaves. I got that secret up there in La Paz o' the Andes fr'm Injuns that hop aroun' them peaks with crated cars an' gran' pianners on their stoopid heads—slavin' like hell f'r days an' days with no other sust'nance. No other sust'nance 't all-at-all, Mister!"...

Here an invisible gong seemed to call a breakaway out of a clinch that left Fleet Street distinctly groggy. The Chief's baffled hand was doing a side-stroke of its own amid the papery waves of his untidy table.

"But . . . to swim the Atlantic Ocean?

Why, man, you're crazy!"

"No, sir." Homer left it firmly at that.

"I stip'late," he went on pensively in a colourless tone, "or I thought o' stip'latin', f'r a couple o' them Malay life-belts they uses in the Phil'pines. 'Course, if they's anythin' agen that——?" The speaker's sigh showed that Death was as second nature to him.

"What d'you want us to do?" was the penultimate towel flung into a ring that was

now wholly Joline's.

"Jus' ter gimme a send-off. Take my picture now an' do a colyum story. I guess that's worth five-an'-twenny bucks to you gents, ain' it? Min' it's no hokum I'm puttin' over. 'Cursed be the deceiver'—as the prophet says—'who hath a male in his flock an' sacrificeth a corrupt thing'!"

The man's sudden passion astounded both

his hearers.

"I wuz once a deacon," he explained to them in sudden self-effacement. "In the first Baptis' Church it wuz, in me home town o' Bald Knob. I guess you've heared tell o' Bald Knob, Mister?" Blank ignorance showed in four English eyes that now were cowed in capitulation. . . . The Chief turned away for moral support to his loyal Mayhew.

"Let's have it quite clear," he began weakly. "This man is not asking the

Budget to finance him?"

"No, sir," the deputy said; "I understand the Quintessencia Company are behind him."

"I'm behind them," Homer Joline corrected gently. "'Course, reely, I shall feed on that lamb's marrer an' coca-leaves I tole you 'bout. But if I win out, I gotta say I owe ev'rything to them people's dope, an'

magic meat-wines as 'ud make ole Jawn D. dance like Gene Tunney in the padded ring: 'Behold he cometh, skippin' on the hills '!—He, He!"

This exuberant titter startled his hearers. "Take him away, Mayhew. Get his photo, and let Tyler do me fifteen hundred words for Page Eight. I'll think out a title for it, and put a special leader opposite within heavy rules."

"But the 'Prime Minister on Coal'——"

"Oh, bank up the nether regions with it! This lad is our Premier now! Take him away, I say!"

The new dictator of London's news paused in the doorway.

"C'n I see you agen, sir, afore I go?"

"No. What is it now?"

"I'd like word sent over to Noo Yark 'bout this affair. It'll kind o' rouse the whole Unide States, an' make f'r better feelin's atween the t'o nations. Besides, you c'n sell the stuff over there an' get back a lot more money than you're handin' me."

"Well—I'll see about that." The Chief rose to bundle the pair of them out. And towards midnight he sent again for Mr.

Mayhew.

"We might cable a thousand words on this Yankee stunt," he opined, pacing the floor and smoking furiously. "After all, it doesn't commit us to anything, and will make a stir, as that fellow said. Let Spitzer feature it in the New York Syren. He can pass it on to his syndicate for use in Chicago and the Middle West, and then down the Pacific Slope from Olympia to San Diego. What say you?" His sub. agreed with him.

"That lad's a queer card," Mayhew remarked. "As the cashier passed him out a fiver, he asked me whether he might have letters addressed to him here. I said 'yes,' after a word with the Circulation Department. If Joline goes as far in the sea as he's likely to do in business, then he'll surely shake himself on the Coney Island sands before a nation-wide welcome that'll make even Lindbergh's loom as a frost!"

II.

TWENTY-FOUR hours after publication, the British Isles were aflame with the forthcoming feat, and also split into warring camps of derision, doubt and indecision. Meanwhile, the reception of parcels, letters and telegrams for Homer Joline threatened to swamp the *Budget* building. The

ground floor was already a General Post Office, with pyramids and piles sprawling anyhow upon wide mahogany counters of the "Small Ads."

The staff were cursing loudly when Mr. Mayhew dived out of the lift into a maelstrom of trouble. An elegant waiting-room was quickly cleared for the new-risen planet of Neptune.

"An' a stenographer," was a prompting not to be denied to modesty which now filled the world with an unearned increment

of fame.

"One that's doin' nothin' in partic'lar," Mr. Joline added. A fast male operator was soon in full blast, and a clever girl was also sent to help him in what began to look like a Texan cross-roads store struck with the

full fury of a tornado.

"I don' deserve all this," the young seaman owned as he stacked up bottles and cans in perilous battalions, with medicines and food-stuffs by the hundredweight. And now these letters! . . . Here were vaudeville and lecture-tours pushed on him by the score, often with earnest-money pinned to eloquent passages which the starman of the *Budget* had fathered upon Homer Joline.

His last will and testament would have drawn tears down iron Pluto's cheek. "If I go under, my last thought will be for my benefactors! If my body be found in trackless ways of that shuttle of ships—and it may be found entire, thanks to my coating of shark-proof grease—then wrap it in Old Glory and lay it to rest in Bald Knob, up there in the lonely Ozarks of the Sovereign State of Arkansas!"...

It was magnificent, Homer's trade admirers vowed. But the war with merciless Atlantic rollers was yet to come. And might God have mercy on his dauntless soul!...

The young man read this stuff out to the "Small Ads." men, whose rugged manager left the room in emotional stress he could not control.

And here also were cables from "the other side," quoting so much a word for:—

"MY PLANS TO RIDE THE OCEAN!"

By

"A MAN ABOUT TO DIE!"

"It'll be time to talk o' money if I get away with it," the new meteor flashed vaguely at foreign friends of all ages and many sexes who peered in at him, or even lent a hand peeling the parcels and piling up goods—that came down upon the unwary when they least expected the avalanche! Rumour of all this tumult reached the Chief at last; and as he hurried into the admiring mob its elements melted away to all departments. Machines were still clacking in the room of rooms. Joline got slowly down from his ladder to fill a glass of the new Juventis tonic for the great man, whom he greeted with thick speech due to a mouthful of succulent Herculoids, which made a mumbling mess of the gratitude that welled up within him.

"I couldn't go out to eat," the new shopkeeper said, swallowing like a snake to make things plain to his patron. "Ain't it lucky there's so much here? One o' your fellers has just 'phoned to a tailor to come on down with all his doin's an' tapes. Seems like I'll ha' to sleep on all these shavin's!"

"One thing we forgot," the Editor said as he set down his glass with an ugly grin. "Just when do you take to the water?"

"W'en summer shines out again," he was

staggered to hear. . . .

"Were was I, miss? Ah—I've got it
—'I beg to thank you f'r the Comp'ny's
cheque, dooly to hand as stated, an' all
remarks noted as per yours o' the fift'—
(Now d'ye get me?). 'As regar's the said
prar'p'sition——'"

"Next summer?" the Chief managed to make heard through tap of machines, the rending of wrappers, and forcing open of endless boxes of vitamines and calories.

"Why, sure! Jus' now the mos' offul gales are out, an' big bergs come waltzin' up fr'm the Nor' Pole. This is no time to swim the Atlantic. You mus' see that, sir?"

"Of course." And the boss of the *Budget* stepped out of the way of yet more swaying postmen and messengers, to whom Joline yelled out orders like a ship's master from the stricken bridge in a storm.

"But just when "the Editor insinuated

gain

"Nex' July," he was told, with meteorological warrant about warm currents and zephyrs of cheery western set. "This is the biggest ever! It's historic, you may say, so it needs a heap o' prep'ration . . . if I'm to have a square deal. Any goadin' or proddin' me means red murder on some-body's han's!"

"Course, I'll dive in any time you say," the victim conceded, seeing blankness linger still on his patron's face. "But you won't

say it, 'cos you hide a big heart in a crinkly shell. You'd be the last of all men to shove me into a wat'ry grave. Jus' think of it, sir, as you lie in a downy bed! Three whole munce in this freezin' water, day an' night, with monsters o' the deep prowlin' round me nose f'r a meal, an' me with no safer casin' than a coatin' o' grease. How could I keep

my ghost fr'm hauntin' yer? ... Oh, harr'ble! If I am ter perish—then gimme a lame dog's chance. . . . W'ere djasay I wuz, miss, with the letter this come in?"

He held up a cheque to the gazing girl, while the lord of Fleet Street waded away kneedeep in sawdust and packingpaper, stumbling as he strode over strips of timber that fairly bristled with wicked nails.

TIT.

ALL Britain was divided over this affair of Homer Joline. Punch showed the little man shadow-boxing with Fate. Some of the dailies (jealous, perhaps, of the Budget's rocketing boost) made a mock of a project worthy of Broadmoor's inmates. Bishops wrote to The Times from castles and palaces (over strange Latin signatures), praying Authority to take a hand in this wanton and futile holocaust of a gallant body and soul. In the medical press great doctors came to wordy blows over the case, and Nature itself was convulsed by Fellows of the Royal Society who weighed the pros and cons of an Atlantic swim under the caption: "CAN IT BE DONE?" So familiar were It and He in this ebb and flow of angry polemics.

"Opinion on this side," the Chief imparted one day to the

hiving busy Homer (who now sent all goods to a repository, where the auction was to be held), "is that your feat is 'impossible.' And you know what they're calling you?"

There was a world of patience in the

young man's watery smile.

"It's diff'runt on the other side," he pointed out at last. "'Cos they know. Looka this!" And with a massy hand the

lad thumped the nearest New York Sunday Supplement, which carried lurid pages of his Success—ay, and of a Failure, too, that burned brighter still—with Joline all but down and out for the last count, crawling up a blue cliff of ice after losing his way on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, what time his mysterious brother turned haggard eyes



up to him from a steel canoe that looked like a gasoline-can run over by a ten-ton tank.

"No, sir," quavered the wronged one. "Impossible is a word like Paverty in th' Amurican dickshun'ry—it simply isn't there! I've said I'll cross th' Atlantic. Or else I'll die. What more can a man say?" The Chief himself was dumb.

Signs were soon seen that the craze was passing and needed poking into fresher flame.

"It's time I was goin'," Joline wrote to New York—he sent out letters every day, and all to the same person. "If I splashed in to-day and swam clear over to Sydney Harbour an' back to the O'Connell Bridge in Dublin Town—I'd get nothing more out of these people than I've got! It's a funny world, Ruth; but you'll hear all about 't in a week or two."

"Tell 'em Noo Yark is callin' me," was a nostalgic inspiration for his new scribe upstairs. "Then the ole folks at home need a sight o' me, an' the sound of a voice that may be f'rever stilled—or else go echoin' down the ages, if Heaven wills it!... That ain't so dusty, is it, sir? I got it out o' the Kansas City Star."

The Editor himself was weary of it all.



"''Course, I'll dive in any time you say,' the victim conceded, seeing blankness linger still on his patron's face.

'But you won't say it, 'cos you hide a big heart in a crinkly shell.'"

He announced his departure to the Other Side in a grateful "Ave Atque Vale!" written for him by the dramatic critic of the paper. All that was possible had been done—over here. He had given of his best; and now his full heart saluted a noble Public who had come forward with both feet—so to say—morally, commercially and financially.

What he wanted now was to get the ground floor cleaned up before the wrecker of it left him in the lurch. That tireless man had a grand send-off at the port, with the Mayor in his robes likening him to one of the gladiators of Old Rome saluting Cæsar before he faced the horrors of the Coliseum.

And what an army of "specials" swarmed up there on D deck!—from the Morning

Journal (a scoffer from the first) to the Paris Gaulois, that wished Monsieur Joline far better luck than fell to Woodrow Wilson in his plunge into the raging flood of European politics!

IV.

Before the Statue of Liberty loomed out of a Prohibitive Land, tugs went bustling down the Bay to meet the Apostle of a Great Perhaps. . . . My, but he looked prosperous, the reporters found! His overcoat cried

"And that dandy diamond ring?"... "Hey, there—a gold cig'rette-case ? I guess King Garge put your name in it 'longside his own!"

"They're all in the swim," was the Syren man's way of summing up these gew-gaws of sudden prosperity.

Joline received such sallies with dignity, as a lion might suffer the scampering rats of his cage. And having doled out photos



hat was of Piccadilly mould; an awesome cobbler of St. James's had made notoriety's shoes. And none of these had charged a cent, deeming it a privilege to serve a man who looked Death in the eyes and turned the dread scythe into a safety-razor, so utter was his unconcern. What a pity that a garment of grease was to be his only wear in the dreary duel that loomed ahead!

The reporters pulled their hero about as children might a doll.

"There's big money in this Ajax stunt," declared one.

"Say, bud," piped another, "whereia get that headlight in your tie?"

and typed sheets, he entered a sumptuous car to drive up the vast canyon of Lower Broadway-pinching his agent's arm as he went with an ecstatic sigh of satisfaction.

Alone in his suite at the Plaza Hotel, Mr. Joline "occupied" the rooms demurely, yet as to the manner born. The band downstairs was playing for him! These kneebreeched flunkeys of an alien breed! Those dainty maids in black silk and lace, with Titania's tread upon velvet carpets! All these grand ladies and money-lords—all, all were less than the dust beneath Homer's chariot wheel to-day. . .

"Well—I—should say!" bubbled Homer

himself, sinking up to his chest in a divanchair that seemed to go down and down—until *he* hopped out of it with a distressing sense of the Atlantic Ocean.

There was a knock at his door, and a trained voice announced:

"A lady to see you, sir."

"Ruth!... Why, it's my—own—darlin' Ruth!"

The girl flew into outstretched arms in a broken passion of tears.

"Wha's the matter? Ain't yer popper

well?"

"He's all right."

"An' Gerrie? An li'l Alvin? An' Poppy? An' baby Joe? An' yer dear ole mother——?"

"They're all all right! But oh, honey—how we've worried over your letters, and all that stuff in the papers. We couldn't get head or tail out of it!"

"Don' cry! I thought I'd find you all smiles. Why, I've swum there an' back, an' all round England, an' two cont'nents

besides!"

"You won't go 'way now, dear?"

"What? After jus' comin' out o' the ocean? Not on your life, my pet! It's all over now! Yes,—an' so's all that hangin' about the docks f'r a jarb. An' that piggin' it in the fo'c'sle with a tin mug o' cocoa an' a mess o' rotten pork an' wormy bread. Shout 'Hooray' f'r me, Ruth! I jus' got wads o' money, an' I'll make a heap more afore I sink into privit life in the light o' your darlin' eyes! I mean on the movies; on circuit an' stage, as well as in all our noospapers. Hooray!"

She was afraid the servants would come

running in to them!

"You gotta jarb, I s'pose?" he put to her when sanity came back.

"At thutty darlars," Ruth nodded. "In Macy's store."

She had dried her eyes and done deft repairs with tiny tools fished out of her bag. So now she could feast her eyes on the idol of both hemispheres—who defied her to say what he had done to deserve all this rich smoke of worship!

"Ain't you all dolled up? And housed here like Rockafella!" She was gazing every way in awe and wonder at it all.

"Whatcha goin' to do now, Homer?"
"Reap the last patches o' my harvest,

an' then-"

"Into the sea, I guess!"

He assented gravely, and a surge of fear eclipsed the shy smile of her maiden eyes.

"Yes," the young man pursued, clasping his love still closer. "The sea o' matrim'ny! Then we'll go down to Bald Knob an' have the time of our lives with the folks."

"Shall we have a farm—or a store in

town?"

"Wait till the summer comes, an' we'll see." His telephone was now calling shrilly.

"They's a bunch o' business guys down there," he told her. "Wait f'r me in there till I tell 'em off, an' see what's in 'em all f'r us! We'll have the rest o' the day to ourselves, so we c'n go down Broadway f'r a nice dinner an' a show. Is it great, love? Is it great?"

A few weeks later, after a very hectic harvest covering thousands of miles, Mr. Joline opened an early-morning message from the *Daily Budget* of London: "Cable actual date of commencing swim—Urgent!"

He replied at once: "To-morrow! But since all the elements favour, we have decided to strike out together on this side!"

EPITOME.

SUN warm me,
Wind cleanse me,
Rain wash me,
Love seek me,
Pain touch me,
Time heal me,
Earth take me,
God keep me.

DOROTHY DICKINSON.



A BAD SITTER.

"Do you mind going a little farther away, dear, I can only see your feet in here?"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE MAN WHO RETURNED. By Vernon W. Bullock.

THE stranger smiled cheerfully as he entered the income-tax office. He had the air of one who was pleased to be amongst those present a man with a clear conscience and nothing to hide.

For a time he remained unnoticed. The eagle was not yet ready for its prey. Presently, however, an official appeared, a benevolent man who looked the embodiment of that old-world courtesv for which tax officials are so justly famous.

"Good morning," he said. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"I wish to see the Inspector, please," asked the stranger.

"Have you an appointment or any papers?"

"Well, no, not exactly. But-"What did you wish to see him about?"

"It's really quite a small matter. If I could-

"Do you want to make a return?" suggested the official.

"That's it," nodded the stranger affably. "Will you---

"Is it Schedule D or Schedule E . . . or is it a claim?" asked the official indulgently. The stranger looked at him blankly.

"I'm afraid I don't understand you. I

merely wish to see the Inspector, to return——" "Are you sure the Inspector is dealing with

the matter?" interrupted the official.... "What name is it, please?" he added as an afterthought.

"My name is Shaw . . . H. P. Shaw. If you will tell him I've called-"

"Shaw," mused the official. . . . "Just a minute while I look it up."

He disappeared from sight, and could be heard flicking the pages of his book of martyrs. He reappeared in a few minutes, obviously puzzled.

"I'm sorry, but I can't trace your name. Are you sure that you have come to the right

"Quite sure," replied the stranger fretfully. "The Inspector asked me to call in-

The official's eyes lit up with understanding. "Haveyoutheletteraskingyoutocall?" he asked quickly. "Ishallwantitforreference."

"I have no letter. He asked me to call the last time I saw him. If you'll just tell him I'm here---'

But the official had vanished. A low murmur of voices could be heard in consultation behind the partition which separates the shearers from the shorn. An older man now came to the counter.

"I understand that you wish to make a

return," he began.

"Yes, that's right," replied the stranger eagerly.

"Mr. Jones, the Inspector——"

'Perhaps it will not be necessary to trouble the Inspector. You see, he does not usually see anyone except by appointment," explained the new-comer. "If you will tell me the nature

ANDY McAndrews, who owned a small car, one day purchased a bicycle.

"I suppose you'll ride your bicycle for exercise?" suggested a friend.

"I'm figur-r-rin' on usin' it for pleasure," replied Andy.

"How do you mean?"

"Weel, all the time I'm a-ridin' it, I'll be



A NATURAL MISTAKE.

FIELDER: Thee've got thy pad on wrong leg, Jarge. JARGE: I thou't I wor goin' in t'other end!

of your business or employment, and give me particulars of your profits or other emoluments

The stranger's patience was exhausted.

"Emoluments be hanged!" he exploded. "Just you go and tell the Inspector I've called to return"—the official looked up expectantly—"the umbrella I borrowed a few days ago!"

a-thinkin' o' the petrol I'm savin' by leavin' my car-r-r at home."



From a report of a lecture by a nerve specialist: "He urged everyone to watch their spine and keep it supple." This is good advice —for giraffes.

THE FREAKS.

By E. H. Lacon Watson.

Pawson and I decided the other day to go down to Westerfield once more for the Autumn Meeting.

It must be many years now since we first went there. I believe it was in the eighties or lies were to be found anywhere in the wide world, wrote enthusiasts, and no such terrible and yawning bunkers, the mere sight of which was enough to unnerve the novice. It grew also a hazard of its own—a most formidable and spiky rush—whole seas of which (waving like pampas grass on the Patagonian plains) fronted the

player as he teed up his ball at those three crucial holes in the middle of the round

But if I say more you may end by recognising

the place. Pawson and I used to be very fond of Westerfield. Some of the pleasantest memories of our lost youth cluster round the old club-house down by that noisome ditch we call the Burn, over which we drive with our opening shot (unless, indeed, we foozle egregiously) and into which the bold driver sails gloriously with his second shot at the last hole, or, playing cannily, trickles in with a topped third. All the way down, we recalled to each other this and other features of the old course as we used to know it before the War. Fortunately compartment empty most of the way.

"I dare say the golf will be all right," said Pawson, who is never what I should call really sanguine, "but all the old fellows must be dead by now. It was the Freaks who really made Westerfield."

And, in a way, I dare say he was right. The golf was above criticism, but perhaps the chief charm of the place lay in the extraordinary collection of characters who had grown up with the course since some genius discovered its suitability for the game. They used to throng the club smoking-room, these old men, exchanging reminis-

cences of the past, or arguing excitedly about the terms of the foursome they were going to play in the afternoon. For these old fellows enjoyed the preliminaries of a good match: they took their time discussing knotty points. The arrangement of handicaps then was not the simple matter it is to-day, when you shall sometimes hear men calculate the number of



THE WEARIN' O' THE GREEN.

CADDIE (wearily, as golfer laboriously studies line of short putt): Go on! Puff a bit 'arder—an' you'll BLOW it in!

early nineties, when golf was comparatively new to us, and indeed to the world at large—outside North Britain and a few selected spots scattered over the habitable globe like currants in a school pudding. Then Westerfield (that is not its real name, by the way) was a sort of Mecca to the young and ardent golfer. Were not its virtues extolled in the Badminton book? No such

strokes they receive on the tee, just before they drive off for the first hole. No! Then it was a matter of argument and diplomacy, as exciting as the arrangement of terms for an international treaty. You selected a partner in a foursome as much for his skill in extracting an extra stroke or two from your common opponents as for any special dexterity

with iron or putter. And it was with iron and putter that these old fellows chiefly excelled-if they had any claim to be considered as players at all. Very few of them were capable of sending the old guttie ball more than a hundred yards at one blow, with any club. Still, even at eighty years and over, they were not always without their use as partners. Old age had given some of them a remarkable store of low cunning.

"You remember the Old Rat?" I said pensively.

Twenty years ago every visitor to Westerfield knew OldRat--Captain Radcliffe, R.N., retired. Mild and venerable in appearance, his chin fringed with long white whiskers, and a terrible fellow at getting up a foursome. I don't what know his handicap would have been in these days, but then he used to get along quite comfortably with thirty-in a foursome - if you allowed him to choose some sturdy

young fellow who could help him over the ground. Once on the green the Rat was not to be despised. And he had early realised the great fact that there is more than one way of proving your value to a side. If you cannot do much in the actual play to assist your partner, it may still be possible to do something towards demoralising your opponents.

The Old Rat worked largely by suggestion. At the fourth hole, for example, if there was a fair breeze against you, enough to make it rather doubtful whether you could carry the bunker from the tee, he would sidle up, carrying his ancient cleek, and lamenting his vanished strength.



THE SILVER LINING.

"By Jove, it's got advertising possibilities."

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes, look at the space you've left for lettering."

"This is where you young fellows have the pull," he would say, as he placed his shot carefully some forty or fifty yards short of the grim boards that shored up the turf. "Over you go, every time, while I play short."

And after that, you know, it was extraordinarily difficult to play short, yourself, as you certainly had intended to play if the wind were

at all strong. Ten to one you tried the drive, and found your ball buried deep in sand just under the boards.

Then, again, there were all sorts of peculiar styles in those days. I imagine there really were more of these in the past. Nowadays most of our prominent golfers are men who began the game young: they did not have to fight their way up like these others, conquering one by one a number of faults consequent on a misspent boyhood. The style of some of our older mem-

respect for the unwritten laws, the etiquette of the game!

"I dare say we were too serious, at times," said Pawson, as we came in from our first morning round. Which was a great admission, for him. "But how the place has changed. All young men now, and pretty useful players at that. Yes! as I said, all the freaks are dead."

"Those two boys behind us were pressing a bit at first," I suggested.

Pawson shrugged his shoulders indulgently.



AWFU'.

"Lost some of yer luggage, sir?"

"Aye, ah canna find a newspaper ah foond in th' train."

Lers was indeed a marvellous affair, when they had taken up the game somewhat late in life. Dear old Creech, for example, now deceased, who bore thick upon him the scars of previous encounters with the various demons of faulty driving. You could almost trace his career as a golfer through examining his stance and swing as he took up his position on the first tee. The remains of previous faults still lay embedded in his system, like pebbles in a piece of conglomerate.

And the seriousness of it all then! What a

"Of course, I had to put a stop to that," he admitted. It was true. Pawson has a way with him when dealing with offenders against the etiquette of the green.

We separated. I went into the drying-room to hang up my coat, for it had been raining a bit. Then I heard the sound of a loud, confident voice as the outside door swung open to admit our two followers.

"Freaks, my dear old thing? Why, the place is just full of them. Always has been. Bunkers crawling with 'em, like a ripe Stilton. See that

fellow who came up and spoke to me on the twelfth green. His particular fad is the Rules of the Game. Thinks no one knows the first thing about golf but himself. Otherwise quite harmless. Name's Pawson. Introduce you after lunch, if you like."

I could not help chuckling to myself. It might be rather fun to watch old Pawson being

drawn out.

But the other fellow answered:

"Oh, the other chap was the scream. His partner, I mean. Did you see how he finished his drive, with the left foot right up in the air, every time?"

A GLIB old stock salesman had just finished describing the glorious opportunities of his proposition to a prospective purchaser with the question: "What do you think of it?"

"I think," drawled the previously bitten man, "that there is just one thing that saves you from being a bare-faced liar."

"What is that?" asked the salesman.

"Your whiskers," was the reply.



LITTLE Bobby, aged four, was allowed to attend the christening ceremony of his baby brother. Bobby was entranced by the novelty



WRONG ENTRY.

SHE (automatically): Farther down the counter, please!

"Rather. I tell you, this is the place for freaks."

And we all went in to lunch. Perhaps I was fulling back a little at the finish, coming home. But still——

888

HE found his hair was leaving the top of his head, and took his barber to task about it.

"You sold me two bottles of stuff to make this hair grow."

"It is very strange it won't grow again," said the barber. "I can't understand it."

"Well, look here," said the man. "I don't mind drinking another bottle, but it must be the last."

of the occasion, and followed events with absorbed interest. But when the parson closed his eyes to pray Bobby's feelings became too much for him. Grasping his mother's hand, he exclaimed, loudly enough for all to hear, "Mother, why is that man talkin' in his sleep?"



THERE is a Society in the United States which does not believe that the earth is round. Of course, things are flat just at present, but not so flat as all that.

ENQUIRING CHILD: Did you and Daddy descend from gorillas, Mummy?

MOTHER: I didn't, darling.

IN TRAINING.

By Herbert Hamelin.

"Good Heavens, what's the matter?" exclaimed Lavender, bursting into the bath-room.

"Guggle-uggle-glug-ah!" I replied.

"But whatever is it?" she demanded. "I thought it was the bath-waste stopped up again. You are not suffering, are you?"

"I doubt it," I replied. "A deep depression centered over Iceland is rapidly getting more depressing, and secondaries to it——"

"Oh, switch off, do!" she snapped. "I

heard all that last night."

I quietly pushed her over a scrap of paper on which was written, "Please move back a fraction from the coffee-pot, and lower your voice a trifle; you will come through better then."



THOSE INCONSIDERATE DOCTORS AGAIN.

"How's your husband to-day, Mrs. Dobbs?"

"Aw, miss, I'm that worrit! The doctor told me to keep him in a recumbent posture, an' I don't know where to get one!"

"Merely a little gargle," I answered airily.

"Just one moment, please. It's quite simple really. You just throw your head well back, hold your breath, take a deep sip, and——"

"I think I'll leave you until you have finished your disgusting exhibition," she said coldly, and left me until we met at the breakfast-table.

"I do hope it will keep fine for the Gubbins' picnic this afternoon," she sighed.

She looked horribly annoyed and was going to say so when the telephone rang.

"Just one moment, please," I remarked

politely as I hurried out.

"Hullo!" I enunciated carefully. "Mr. Biggleswicke calling. Yes?—Oh, Mrs. Gubbins?—Can't hear me?—I beg your pardon—We must apologise for the slight break in our transmission—I was talking down the wrong end.

SKETCH for PROFIT!

have done good business here and I feel sure that by the end of your excellent Course I shall certainly be able to manage my own studio in this City. Please accept my hearty thanks."

The above has been sent to us from an A.B.C. pupil in Bombay, and is only one of many letters we receive from past and present pupils.

while you L'arn, and the tuition fee may conbe earned before you have completed the this Course. But a Correspondence Course for







ANGUS WATSON & Co., LIMITED, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.



SHOE No. 2795 (illustrated below) is a Superior Golf Shoe in selected Tan Zug, with plain vamps, imitation stitched cap, smooth insoles, sealed seams and Uskide soles and heels.

A shoe which can be worn all day on the links, whether in driving rain or hot sunshine. Oral shoes are obtainable from most good shoe shop:. If there is not an Oral agent in your town, write to address below:

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NORTHANTS.

RUSHDEN

SHOE No. 2795. Fittings 5 and 6.



Just one moment, please—Your picnic? Delightful. Are you going to be one of those who scatter their disgusting sardine-tins and half-sucked bananas all over the place? Last August Bank Holiday I picked up three battered fruittins, five empty bottles of beer and an orange skin in my garden. I——"

"Oh, just one moment, please." I broke off hurriedly, as Lavender appeared behind me with a stormy look. "We are very fortunate in having in the studio this morning Mrs. George Biggleswicke, the wife of that charming Mr. Biggleswicke of Little Popham. She is going to give you a short talk on 'Picnic Catering.' I hope she is going to mention my fondness for

I receive for my literary outpourings will not suffice to keep you in the motors and lipsticks to which you have been accustomed. I have now applied for a job, and have already begun training for it."

"What job?" she inquired breathlessly. "Just one moment, please," I murmured, as

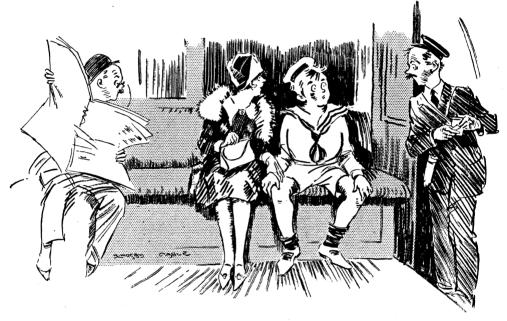
I moved to the door.

"The job of a Wireless Announcer," I said as I closed it behind me.



Two men were talking about the eloquence of a certain member of Parliament.

"Yes," said one, "I like to hear him talk



PROGNOSIS.

CONDUCTOR: How old are you, boy?

THE BOY: Four.

CONDUCTOR: Well, you can travel half fare this time, but when you grow up you'll either be a liar or a giant.

lobster salad. Just one moment, please—Mrs. Biggleswicke."

"I want some money, please," Lavender demanded, after she had closed down.

Sadly I emptied my pockets. "Here you are, my dear," I said. "One whole Shanghai tael. There are not many wives who can boast of such a generous husband."

She looked terribly greedy as she snatched at it.
"Two and sevenpence farthing in coppers!"
she fumed. "Look here, what is all this about?

she fumed. "Look here, what is all this about? I don't understand you to-day. What are you up to?"

"Lavender," I replied solemnly, "I cannot keep the dreadful secret to myself. I have for a long time realised that the miserable pittance

but he always reminds me of a fisherman friend of mine. This chap was telling of one of the big ones he had caught when a listener interrupted:

"'I notice that in telling about that fish you caught, you vary the size for different listeners.'

"'Quite right,' admitted my friend. 'I make it a point never to tell a man more than I think he will believe.'"



"Is the dentist disengaged?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh—er—tell him I'll call again when he's busy."





The Proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap offer the following prizes to be awarded in order, to the FIRST 44 CORRECT REPLIES to the Crossword Puzzle OPENED AFTER THE CLOSING DATE.

FIRST PRIZE for 1st correct reply opened on Dec. 18th, 1928.

value **£**2

4 DOOR SALOON CAR 14/28 H.P. Four wheel brakes, upholstered in real leather, full equipment, ready for the road. Taxed and insured to end of 1929.

SECOND PRIZE for 2nd correct reply opened on Dec. 18th, 1928.

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MULLINER FABRIC SALOON. Fully equipped, ready for the road, and insured to end of 1929.

In the event of the cars being won by foreign or colonial competitors they will be insured, packed and put on steamer free of charge.

12 Prizes of £5 each

10 Prizes of £2 each

20 Prizes of £1 each

Solutions must be accompanied by 3 outside printed wrappers from tablets of Wright's Coal Tar Soap. No other enclosure to be inserted in envelope which must be marked "Crosswords," Wright's Coal Tar Soap, 44/50 Southwark Street, London, S.E. 1 to reach this address not later than Dec. 17th, 1928. It is suggested to Colonial readers to forward their replies as quickly as possible, and to see that they are properly franked for postage.

In all cases the decision of the Proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap must be accepted as final and NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERTAINED. Results will be announced in "The Daily Mail," Dec. 22nd and "The Sunday Chronicle," Dec. 23rd.

CLUES

Across

Across

1. Infectious disease, warded off by W.C.T.S. 9 Part of the verb to be. 13. Feminine name. 14. Portend. 15. Oint.ment (Use Wright's Coal Tar). 16. Close. 17. Plunder. 18. Possession: 19. Entrance. 20. Measure. 21. Fittest. 22: Cosy home. 24. From. 26. Apex. 28. Mother. 29. Wash. (Do this with Wright's Coal Tar Soap). 32. Edge. 35. With soap creates 56 across. 37. Stop. 38. Sharp. 40. Designated. 42. Feminine name. 43. Not so cold as 33 down. 44. Attitudes. 46. Affirmative. 47. Paradise. 48. Number. 49. Modern. 51. Spoil. 53. Wiles. 56. Wright's Coal Tar Soap gives a good one. 60. Watering-place. 62. Flower. 64. Tapestry. 65. Related. 60. Departed. 67. Chairs. 68. Removed by Wright's Coal Tar Soap. 69. Great. 70. States. 71. Corrects dislocations.

14 20 23 24 30 38 43 50 56 64 67

Down

1. Ballad. 2. Use Wright's Coal Tar Soan and be this. 3. Precious stone. 4. Scarcest. 5. Powerful. 6. Implements. 7. An Image. 8. Mesh. 9. Inner Bark. 10. Otherwise. 11. Evenings. 12. Skin trouble relieved by Wright's Coal Tar Ointment. 15. On a tablet of Wright's

Coal Tar Soap. 27. Limb. 23. Pull. 24. Passengers. 25. Used for mirrors. 27. Utensil. 28. Imp. 29. Shelter. 30. Skiifully. 31. Valley. 33. Made very cold. 34. Tube. 36. Become Slenderer. 39. Noise.

41. Lair. 45. Much water here. 48. Product of Coal. 50. Provides the best soap. 51. Confusion. 52. Part of a church. 54. Fish. 55. Burn. 57. Surface. 58. Waiter. 59. Headgear. 60. Cleansed by Wright's Coal Tar Soap. 61. Emmets. 63. Prophet. 65. Fuss.

In submitting this solution I agree to all the conditions enumerated above.

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The Mindsor Magazine.

No. 406.

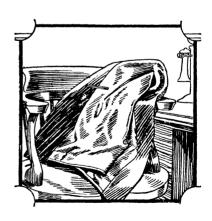
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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION of "The Windsor Magazine," post free to any part of the world, 15s. At reduced postage rate to Canada, 13s. 6d.

Binding Cases for half-yearly volumes can be obtained through any bookseller at 1s. 6d.

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903. Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by the Canadian Magazine Post.

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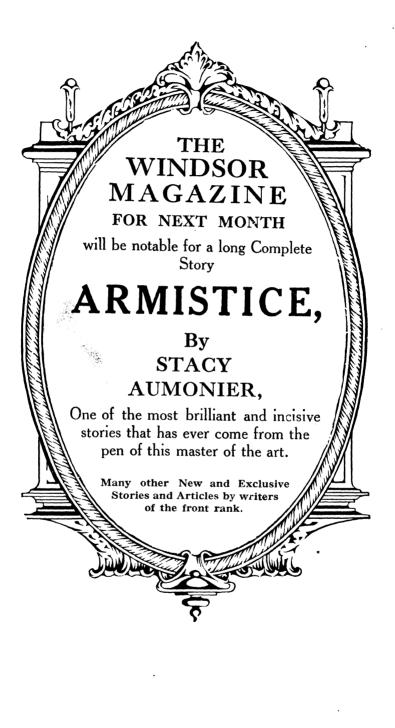
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Photo] [Foulsham & Banfield, Ltd. H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE PRINCE'S LIFE

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS AS A HUMORIST

By WALTER T. ROBERTS

THE Prince of Wales could never fulfil the duties of his high position so admirably and successfully did he not possess the capacity for enjoying the lighter aspect of his life and a considerable sense of humour.

Being unofficial, the tour of the Prince with his brother in East Africa is being undertaken in the unceremonious way he particularly wished. It will be numbered among the

among the lighter experiences of his life.

On the public platform, in his strolls about the East End, at dinner tables, at public functions, on golf links and elsewhere, H.R.H. always manages to be humorous in the right way at the right moment.

Take, for example, the way he opened his address to the London Society of Medicine when he was its guest at dinner.

The occasion called for a rather serious speech. The speech the Prince prepared and delivered

was in the main serious. But he felt that a light touch was needed—something that would get a laugh from the grave audience of medical experts without offending them.

It was when he was in his car on the way to the dinner that the idea he wanted flashed into his mind. "I have it," he said with a chuckle to the member of his staff who was with him.

And here is the way he opened his speech.

"It is almost impossible." said H.R.H., "to imagine an age so fortunate as to need no doctors. I expect the only reason why there were no doctors in the Garden of Eden was that Eve obviously knew the familiar prescription, 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.',

The doctors chuckled, even Lord Dawson of Penn, who was in the chair, smiled, and the Prince knew he had at once put himself on good terms with his audience.

I shall return later to some of



A JOKE AT HURLINGHAM.

the Prince's jokes from the platform, but for the moment I may deal with H.R.H. as a humorist elsewhere. His sense of humour and his capacity for enjoying a joke have stood him in good stead in his rambles about the East End.

The Prince during one of his visits to Deptford got into conversation with the owner of a small old clo' shop.

"How do you find business?" asked the

Prince.

"Well, sir," answered the old clo'man, looking deprecatingly at his stock, "the

necessary to remember faces than it is in mine."

"Oh yes, there is, John," said the Prince.

"And what job may that be, sir?"

"Mine," replied the Prince. "If I forgot a face it might get me into far worse trouble than you'd get into if you forgot one."

An attendant at a dance club recently told the writer a characteristic story of the Prince, illustrating how H.R.H. in the form of a joke can convey a reproof.

He was leaving the club and the night



[Alfieri.

ONE FOR LORD RIDDELL AT THE OPENING OF A PUBLIC GOLF COURSE.

fact is them things are just a bit too old to sell, but I'll have a better lot in soon."

"Oh, don't call them too old," replied H.R.H., "they are like myself, getting on towards middle-age, perhaps."

The Prince's reply raised a hearty laugh among the costers standing near, in which the old clo'man joined.

One of H.R.H.'s East End friends, by the way, is a door-keeper at a West End club to which the Prince belongs.

Some little while ago, during a talk with the Prince, the porter said, "There ain't no job, sir, in the world, in which it is more was extremely cold. Someone, it seemed, had walked off with his overcoat.

"Well, sir, whoever took it will feel honoured when he finds out whose coat he has been wearing," said a friend of the Prince. The "honoured" did not please the Prince; that kind of flattery always annoys him.

"I know I shall feel jolly cold, and for a much better reason," he replied rather tartly. Nobody, however, had taken the coat, and it was brought to light after a little search.

One of the secrets of the Prince's popularity is undoubtedly his capacity for enjoying the lighter side of life. Here are

some extracts from the Diaries kept on board H.M.S. Renown during the Prince's voyages, which show how well the Prince can enter into and enjoy whatever fun is going on. These diaries were printed for private circulation and it is permissible to quote from them.

The following is an extract giving an account of a "show" attended by the Prince at Melbourne.

"There was lots of fun., H.R.H., Mount-batten, and two of the girls ransacked a

dance on board the Renown before she left Sydney

"It was a splendid wind-up to a glorious month. H.R.H. was in his usual good spirits, and the last sight most of Sydney had of him was scrapping on the aft deck with Mountbatten and others of the staff in a very dishevelled condition."

Here is another entry that is worth

quoting.

"The Prince of Wales gave a dinner on board, the guests landing about 10.30 p.m.



[Topical.

ON THE TERRACE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A joke with Lord Reading, Admiral Wemyss, and American airmen; a happy picture taken some years ago.

wardrobe, and the Prince of Wales appeared in a pair of very big tennis shoes, the trousers up nearly to his knees, an enormous blue flannel coat that must have belonged to a man weighing about 16 stone, and a squash hat, also too big for him. Mountbatten appeared in a dressing-gown and a top-hat, and the two girls got themselves up very cleverly in gipsy rig. H.R.H. hoped 'nobody minded.'

"The party ended with a bit of a 'scrap,' and our white ties were rather the worse for wear at the end of it all."

Here is another extract dealing with a

after which H.R.H. joined a party who were trying to catch fish from the quarter-deck. One officer who had been ashore said, when he came back about 11.30 p.m.: 'The most astonishing thing you ever saw was the future King of England in a pair of shorts and a sweater sitting at the bottom of the starboard ladder catching sea-snakes!'"

In this connection there is a point concerning H.R.H. that is worth mentioning. No Heir to the Throne has ever mixed so freely with all kinds and classes of people and with so little ceremony. Yet he has never been placed in a position derogatory

to the dignity of his high position and he has never had to drop one of his acquaintances because of over-familiarity. It is a well-known fact that the late King had to do so in more than one instance.

To return to the Prince as a humorist on the platform or as an after-dinner speaker.

Not long since H.R.H. was the guest of



[Topical,

THE SMILING PRINCE AT AN EAST END CLUB.

the O.P. Club at a dinner, when he made a speech on "Theatrical Audiences."

He spoke in a rather serious vein, but told a story before he ended that got a big laugh.

"Audiences," said the Prince, "in America do not boo when they disapprove of a play; they simply walk out of the theatre. I was told in New York a story of how on the first night of the production of a new play the audience began to leave the theatre so quickly that a man stood up and shouted out. 'Women and children first.'"

When the laughter had subsided, the Prince added, "Well, bearing that incident in mind, I think I had better bring my speech to a close." And this elicited another laugh, though everybody really wished the

Prince had made a longer speech.

The Prince's humour is always of the quiet kind and is sometimes marked by unexpectedness.

I imagine Lord Balfour is aware of this; anyway, one of the best of the Prince's platform jokes was made at his

expense.

The incident happened when the Prince was installed as Chancellor of the University of Wales at Cardiff. After his installation, H.R.H. conferred honorary degrees on some distinguished men, including Lord (then Mr.) Balfour.

The Prince addressed each recipient of a degree in Welsh.

Now it so happened that the previous week Lord Balfour, as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, had conferred an honorary degree on the Prince, when he addressed the Prince in Latin.

At Cardiff, after the degrees had been conferred and the Prince had finished speaking in Welsh, he got in his quiet little joke. After referring to the fact that a week before Lord Balfour had conferred a degree on him at Cambridge, when he addressed him in Latin, the Prince went on: "Latin is a tongue I regret to say I am not as familiar with as I ought to be. . . . I dare not compare my pronunciation of Welsh (in which I addressed Lord Balfour) with his faultless

and scholarly Latin, but I cannot help thinking he understood considerably less of my remarks to him a momert ago in Welsh than even I did of what he said to me in Latin last week at Cambridge."

It must be remembered that the whole of the Prince's speech was in serious vein, and his unexpectedly witty ending greatly amused his audience, and none more than Lord Balfour.

In his speech at the Newspaper Press Fund dinner some years ago the Prince told an amusing story which is well worth repeating.

He was talking of the necessity for "intelligent anticipation" in journalism.

"The best example of intelligent anticipation of this kind that I have experienced," he said, "was when I was travelling in one of our Dominions, and an aeroplane specially sent out to meet me on the way dropped heavy bundles of local newspapers giving the fullest account of my visit to, my demeanour at, and departure from, a certain town, just



[Central News

THE PRINCE GOOD-HUMOUREDLY UNDERGOING THE TIME-HONOURED CEREMONY WHEN "CROSSING THE LINE" FOR THE FIRST TIME.



[Central News.

AN UNCONVENTIONAL SNAPSHOT TAKEN IN AMERICA.

When requested by the camera man to "smile," the Prince retaliated by demanding "a funny story."

three-quarters of an hour before I arrived at it; perhaps in these days of the race for speed 'intelligent anticipation' is preferable to a belated record."

The Prince's good-humour never fails him. He has shown that he can be funny even in circumstances that are enough to try most men's tempers.

During his South African tour he visited a golf course that some hardy pioneers had laid out in one of those inaccessible regions where Nature has put many difficulties in the way of golfers.

There was no club-house of any kind, but there were other things—boulders and rocks—and some of them lay in the fairway.

Patiently the Prince negotiated the difficulties, but he had not much luck. The climax was reached when he saw his ball, after a carefully played approach shot, strike the raw edge of a boulder and disappear goodness only knew where.

But H.R.H. kept smiling. "I did not say a word, I assure you," he remarked with a grin to one of his staff who looked inquiringly at him.

During his Australian tour the

Prince at Sydney became surrounded by an immense crowd when walking back to his hotel after a lunch to which he had been entertained by the City authorities and at which he had made a speech.

It was a scorching hot day, and the Prince was rather tired. He had been up early, had been working the whole day, and had more work before him in the evening. But he kept smiling as he slowly struggled through the crowd who were trying to shake hands with him.

"You ought to make this place your

home, sir," shouted someone.

"I should love to," replied the Prince, but won't you let me get to my hotel and fetch some things to start the home with?"

The crowd laughed and gradually the Prince got through the struggling mass of humanity without for a moment losing his temper.

It always annoys the Prince for anyone to ask him when he is going to get married, even when the question is put by way of a joke, though as a matter of fact none of the Prince's friends in Great Britain would think of annoying him in that way.

But when he was last in New York he was asked a question about the possibility

of his marriage in circumstances that made him smile. At a dinner party a lady asked the Prince what he would do when he became King of England.

It was a rather silly question, and the Prince, in the most matter-of-fact way, replied that he would try to follow his

father's example.

"Then why don't you begin doing so now, sir," asked the lady, "and get married?"

The Prince could not help smiling. "Well, you have me there," he replied.

It is characteristic of the Prince, and a fact about him worth noting, that as a humorist, whether on the platform or elsewhere, he is never cynical. His experience of life and his knowledge of men and affairs are more considerable than those which most men gain in a lifetime.

Cynicism in men of such wide knowledge of the world and of men is often to be found. But the Prince's experience of life has taught him to love his fellow-men rather than to laugh at them. And that is one of the reasons why His Royal Highness has won the kind regard of all the sorts and conditions of people with whom he has come in contact all over the world.

THE LITTLE COUNTRY STATIONS.

THE little country stations—
We pass them in a flash,
With shriek of raucous warning,
With thund'ring roll and crash.

We glimpse their flower-decked platforms,

To read their names we crane; "Oh, what a dear wee village!" "Look, what a lovely lane!"

Tree-girt, the old grey churches Stand where have ever stood,

Slow-changing through the ages, Shrines of the holy rood.

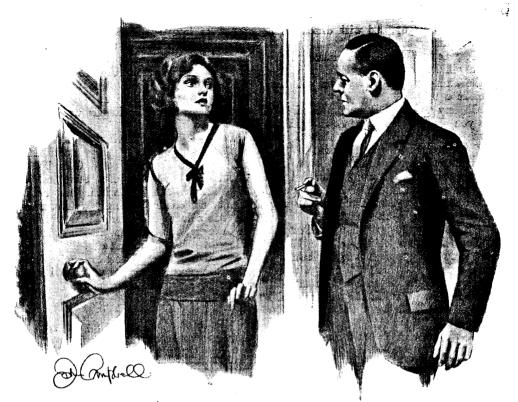
Orchard and farm and cottage— Meadow and hedge-lined roadDucks on a pond dark-shadowed—Cattle that gaze and brood....

The little country stations—
I think I hear them say:
"The great expresses bear you
To cities far away,

"But broad and shining pavements, And buildings fine and tall, Hurry and noise and glamour— These, gentles, are not all!

"Taste you our peace, our quietness, Unchanged from year to year! The best of your dear England Is here!" "And here!" "And here!"

GRACE MARY GOLDEN.



"'I suppose you know that's my room!' she cried. 'What do you want in there?'"

THE CAT'S MILK

By H. C. BAILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

R. FORTUNE, his elbow on the table and his chin in his hand, with large and solemn eyes contemplated the one nectarine which remained in the dish.

"Yes. Perhaps you're right, Joan," said Mr. Fortune, but he took it. He ate it slowly between sips of a white wine. He shook his head. "An ingenious experiment. One of my failures."

"Can't you move?" Mrs. Fortune in-

quired.

"You're treating a serious subject with levity," Mr. Fortune sighed. "That Anjou wine doesn't really go with the subtler fruits.

There's something of quinces about it. Too insistent. We must keep to the Sauternes."

Mrs. Fortune rose decisively. "Shall I tell Emily to clear you away?" she asked as she departed.

He followed her into the garden, to the shade of the sweet-brier hedge, and lowered himself with caution into a deck chair. "Why this wild haste?" he murmured, and lit a cigar.

"Poor dear," Mrs. Fortune smiled, and ruffled his hair. "Such a poor dear. We have the mothers' meeting coming to tea this afternoon."

"My only aunt!" Reggie groancd. He

squirmed, he sat up, and with dazed horror

watched Emily bring coffee.

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Fortune kindly. "You will have to be the little gentleman all the afternoon. I expect you will have to make a speech."

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie moaned. "I hate you, Joan." He sank down again on to the small of his back. "How I hate you," he murmured with passion.

And then Emily came back. Dr. Smithson, of Tavington, had rung up and wanted to speak to Mr. Fortune. Reggie opened one eye at her and grunted that he was busy and she could take the message.

"Oh, naughty temper," said Mrs. Fortune.
"You have no heart, Joan," Reggie mumbled. "No woman has any heart."

Emily was back again. "He says to say he's Tim Smithson, sir, and you'll remember him and he must speak to you yourself."

Reggie waved her away and rose in slow

instalments.

"Who is he, child?" said Mrs. Fortune.

"He was the messiest house physician I ever knew," said Reggie bitterly, and went to the telephone.

But when he returned he had a hat and gloves and a smile. "Men must work and women must weep," he announced, and kissed his wife. "My love to the mothers, darling."

"Pig!" said Mrs. Fortune with conviction. "Oh, pig! What does the man want, Reggie?"

" Me. Just me."

His car bore him away from the river and the mellow orchard valley, climbed through the heather of sandy hills, and came to a lonelier country of brown stone and woodland where the stream wrought out deep clefts and pools beneath cliffs of foliage.

He lay back wondering what Smithson had been up to. Over the telephone Smithson, always of an incoherent mind, was obscurely excited. It was not really his affair at all. Fortune must understand the lady was not a patient of his: but he had been called in and he didn't care to refuse; it would have made most unpleasant talk, and Fortune knew how scandal grew in these little towns. Mrs. Heath had met with an accident. They found her lying in the rhododendron pool. Smithson really knew nothing of the circumstances, nothing at all: he had not been called in till the day after. When he saw her, her condition was very serious: the left arm broken and two ribs, possibly internal injuries; she was

prostrate from the shock. In his situation he did not like to bear the responsibility of the case. It was really not fair that they should have sent for him. As soon as he thought over his position he felt he ought to have Fortune's opinion.

On that point only Reggie was prepared

to agree with him.

The little town of Tavington preserved an ancient comfortable dignity, some of it timbered Elizabethan, some Georgian red brick. The house of Dr. Smithson was Georgian without, but within had neither dignity nor comfort, being, like him, messy. He was a loose-made man, loosely clothed and shaggy, with the complexion of indigestion and a walrus moustache.

He gushed, "My dear Fortune! Such a relief to see you. I said to myself, 'Fortune won't have forgotten old times."

"I haven't," said Reggie, and sat gin-

gerly on the hard patients' chair.

"Really too good of you, my dear fellow." Smithson rubbed his hands. "Too good."

"Yes. Quite. That bein' that—and having thought it over—what's the matter with your position?"

"I'm very uneasy, Fortune." Smithson wriggled. "They really shouldn't have called me in, you know. Mrs. Heath was an old patient of my father's, but she quarrelled with me some time ago and went to Dillon. He's a new man here, a pushing young fellow. I don't know what people see in him myself." Smithson was plaintive. "He has a way with women. That type of man, Fortune."

"Yes. Yes. A sad world. So Dillon got on with Mrs. Heath—till she fell into the

pool?"

"Not so much with Mrs. Heath as with her niece, Fortune," said Smithson.

"Yet Mrs. Heath being down and out, the niece sent for Dr. Smithson?"

"No, indeed. It was Mr. Brett who insisted that I should be called in. He told me so."

"Oh, my hat!" Reggie groaned. "Why is there always somebody else? Who is the unexplained Brett?"

But Smithson went on with his reminiscences. "Dillon did not like it at all. He couldn't refuse to meet me, of course. That would have made an open scandal. And in the suspicious circumstances! But he was very sullen and unpleasant."

"Oh yes. Yes. The circumstances bein' suspicious. You said you didn't know

anything about the circumstances."

"Well, really," Smithson twisted his "I didn't want to commit myself, Fortune."

"Yes. I noticed that. It makes you a little vague, you know. Let's define things."

Goading the evasive Smithson on this side and that to the facts, he made them out at last. Mrs. Heath was the great lady of the place, and a childless widow. She lived at Tavington House with her niece Valerie Caryll. She was nearly seventy but quite healthy and capable. Smithson couldn't say she was well liked-she had a way of setting people's backs up-ordering everybody about, you know-and a very difficult temper. But quite a lady, of course. Miss Caryll—Smithson put out his loose underlip at her—Miss Caryll was one of these very modern young women. thought she knew everything. No doubt she did know a great deal. Then Mr. Brett—he was a quite different type, a very pleasant, genial fellow, racing man and all that sort of thing. He was Mrs. Heath's nephew, but he didn't live with her, in fact he had not been at Tavington when she met with her accident. He came down the next day and, finding how seriously she was hurt, insisted that Smithson should be called in. Of course, it was quite natural. Smithson's father had been the family doctor. Smithson might say that all the best people still came to him. No doubt Mrs. Heath would never have left him if Dillon had not worked his way in. Dillon was half foreign—an Italian mother, or something. Dillon read Italian with Miss Caryll.

"Yes. Very reprehensible," Reggie mur-"You said Mrs. Heath's affair was

an accident, Smithson."

"My dear Fortune! I have no right to say anything else. I must not prejudice you in any way. What I'm informed is just this. At dusk on the night before last one of Mrs. Heath's gardeners found her lying in the rhododendron pool. She was unconscious. She was taken home and Dillon was sent for. When I saw her the next day she was still not fully conscious. She is in the same condition to-day. I told you about her injuries."

"The pool," Reggie murmured. "That'll be one of these pools with steep banks. Little cliffs. Twenty-foot drop to the

Smithson's loose lip gaped. "You've been there!"

"No, no. Saw 'em like that coming along."

Smithson looked uncomfortable. you describe it exactly. Well, of course, a fall from the top of the bank would quite account for her condition."

"Yes; it could be," Reggie murmured. "Oh certainly, I agree. She was walking in the twilight—an old lady—she fell. so. The night nurse reports Oh, I should tell you they have a nurse at night, but Miss Caryll is with her all day. The nurse reports that on the first night she said something like 'Pushed me. I was pushed.'"

Reggie lay back and gazed at Dr. Smith-

son with round wondering eyes.

And Smithson shifted the papers on his untidy table. "Of course, you see that makes a very serious situation."

"Yes. Yes. Has she said anything

"Miss Caryll declares that she hasn't spoken. The nurse heard nothing last night. You see, Fortune, considering her condition, I can hardly believe she did speak."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured; and still contemplated Dr. Smithson. "Yes, I'll have to see her. I'll see her quick, please."

He stood up.

"Oh, certainly. You're very good. I-I'll just telephone. I must warn Dillon."

Reggie watched the door close on Smithson's shambling hurry. "She hasn't spoken since she saw you," he said. "I wonder."

His car carried them through a park of green hillsides and dark coverts to Tavington House. It is of brown stone in the Victorian baronial style. Gardens of many kinds spread about it, great rose-beds, lily ponds, geometrical patterns in sunken compartments, broad borders ablaze, a wilderness with banks of shrubs and flowering trees, hawthorn, laburnum. But their flowers were turned to berries and seed-pods and the shadow of autumn was over all. Reggie looked with hungry eyes and sighed. "Voluptuous place," he moaned. break the tenth commandment, son?"

"I-really, Fortune, I don't know why you should say so."

"I do. I always covet gardens. I hate Mrs. Heath."

Smithson gazed at him and looked away

and gulped.

They came to the house. In a little glum drawing-room of Victorian antiques Reggie was introduced by an uncomfortable Smithson to Mr. Brett. There was nothing uncomfortable about him.

"Ah, that's good. Very kind of you to

come, Mr. Fortune. Smithson's told you all about it?"

"Smithson's told me," Reggie said, and considered him. He was nothing in particular; he might have been in a shop or the Army; he was well enough made and dressed and mannered. He had a jaw. "I had better see Mrs. Heath," said Reggie.

"I've told Valerie. I suppose she'll be

"I've told Valerie. I suppose she'll be here in a minute. She's always with my aunt, you know. Valerie—she's my cousin, Miss Caryll. Almost the mistress of the

house.''

And Valerie came: a dark girl, made like a boy but too slight for that, and with a face that no boy ever wore, a face which knew life and thought and passion.

"Mr. Fortune?" She stood away from him. "Dr. Dillon will be here presently."

"Oh yes, we had better wait for Dr. Dillon," said Smithson in a hurry.

"I don't know the etiquette," Brett smiled. "You'd better give Mr. Fortune some tea, Valerie."

"Ring, then," she said over her shoulder. She had not ceased to look at Mr. Fortune. "My aunt is not conscious—did they tell you?"

"She hasn't spoken again?"

"No, she hasn't spoken. I don't believe she ever did speak."

"You think not?" Reggie murmured.

The tea was brought and with the tea came a grey Persian cat, large ruffed, majestical. He sat in the middle of the room, surveyed them one by one with narrowing golden eyes and yawned.

"Hullo! Thought the Emperor was with

auntie." Brett smiled.

"So he was," said Valerie. "He's left her for his tea, I suppose." Reggie, a friend of cats, was pained: he bent and tickled the Emperor respectfully. The Emperor walked a yard away.

Valerie laughed. "Almost human, isn't he, Mr. Fortune?" She gave Reggie a cup.

"But he should have his first," Reggie

protested.

"Oh, if you like." She poured a saucer of milk and set it down. The Emperor watched her, came to the milk, looked at it and sat down by it. Then he licked his lips and walked to the door and said that he wished to go.

"Well, I'm hanged," said Brett. "Poor

old man."

"We don't like strangers, perhaps," Reggie murmured, and opened the door for the Emperor.

A sturdy fellow confronted him, handsome in a sleek sallow way, and scowled, "Mr. Fortune, is it?"

"Mind the cat," said Reggie. The Emperor withdrew from advancing feet with disdain and sped out behind them. "Yes. Dr. Dillon, I presume? I've only been waiting for you."

"Have you, then? Smithson's told you all about it, I suppose." Dillon turned from him to Valerie. "Mr. Fortune can

go up now?"

"When you like." They looked at each other more than a moment before Dillon led the way out.

Mrs. Heath's room was vast and gloomy and so full of odd furniture that Reggie could not at first discover her bed. He drew the curtains back from one of the many windows and the nurse came to help him, an oldish woman with peaceable shrewd eyes.

"I don't see any change, sir. I've only just come in now. Miss Caryll's with her through the day. She's been like this all

the time."

"The first night?" Reggie murmured.

"She was a little restless the first night.

She tried to speak then."
"Yes. Yes. What exactly did she say?"
"Something about 'pushed,' sir, 'pushed
me' or 'I was pushed.' I couldn't tell if

she was coming to or delirious."
"Not very sure, are you?" Dillon said

harply.

"I'm sure she said 'pushed,' doctor."
Then she settled off again."

"And when you went off duty in the morning she was just as she is now?"

The nurse looked puzzled. "Yes, sir. Well, sir, I couldn't quite say. I thought she seemed doing nicely then, but it's gone on, you see, and she looks worse to my mind."

"These cases of shock and concussion,"

Dillon shrugged.

"Yes. Yes. As you say," Reggie murmured, and moved to the bed.

Mrs. Heath lay breathing noisily. Save where bruises swelled dark on her brow, she was of a livid pallor. Reggie drew back the clothes and his gentle hands moved over her. . . .

"She's so cold, sir," the nurse said.

"She's always so cold."

"You think so?" Reggie murmured, and wandered away. "Where's a room?" He turned to Dillon.

"We can go into Miss Caryll's study,"

said Dillon, and Smithson cleared his throat.

Miss Caryll's study was a severe place lined with books, of no decorations but a bowl of autumn foliage on the plain oak table. Reggie sat himself on the cushioned fender. "Well. Anything occur to you?"

"Plain case, isn't it?" said Dillon. "She'd a great fall. There's the fractures, concussion, shock. That accounts for every-

thing. No mystery about it."

"You—you take it she fell?" Smithson stammered. "We—we have to consider

what she said, you know."

Dillon made an impatient noise. "What she said! We don't know what she said. I'll consider what she has to say when she's in her senses."

"Well, well. Don't be cross," Reggie

murmured.

Dillon turned on him. "You're amusing yourself, aren't you?"

"Oh no, no, I'm not amused."

"You don't give us your opinion."

"Did you want it?" Reggie contemplated his sullen stare with eyes half shut. "Well, I think it's a matter of nursing. She must have some more nursing."

"What do you mean? She's always had the night nurse. Miss Caryll's been with her all day." Dillon flushed. "I suppose

you don't trust Miss Caryll?"

"You're so cross, you know," Reggie murmured. "Mrs. Heath must have a trained nurse always with her. I'll get two down to-night. Then she may have a chance." He slid off the fender, he opened the door. "You might tell them," he said, and went back into Mrs. Heath's room.

The nurse stood up. "Yes, I forgot to ask you." He came to the table by the bed, he fingered a cup with a spout, a lidded jug. "What have you been giving her?"

"Dr. Dillon said to try her with a little

milk every few hours."

"Oh yes. Yes. She's taken it?"

"Just at first a little. She didn't swallow properly last night."

"Any sickness?"

"No, sir. Not with me. She did seem as if she wanted to retch once or twice."

"Yes. Yes." Reggie bent over the woman.

"She does look to be in such pain, poor dear," the nurse said.

The pallid face was drawn in strange suffering, as though, unconscious, she was miserable. "The distress. Yes." Reggie murmured. He drew back the eyelids and

saw the pupils widely dilated. "Yes. Don't give her anything more." He looked at the nurse. "Nothing. You're in charge. I'll see you have help soon."

The little drawing-room gave forth loud sounds as he came down to it, was silent when he opened the door. Then Valerie broke out at him. "Dr. Dillon says you've ordered more nurses. We don't need any more nurses. I can look after my aunt, Mr. Fortune." Her dark eyes flashed.

"Mr. Fortune doesn't think so, that's

all," Dillon laughed.

"Look here, Dillon, you needn't make trouble," said Brett. "I'm hanged if I know why you two should object. Mr. Fortune says we ought to have another nurse or so. Well, we must, then. Dash it, it's only decent. Besides, if you call him in and won't do what he says—well, what's it look like?"

"I didn't call him in," Valerie cried.

"Oh, I say! This won't do, Val. What's the matter, anyway? You don't mind Auntie having nurses?"

Valerie kept her angry eyes on Reggie. "Why shouldn't I nurse her myself, Mr. Fortune?"

"It's too grave a responsibility, Miss Caryll."

"You mean you don't trust me? Well,

say it, then!"

"Why should I say it?" Reggie watched her a moment and turned to Dillon. "Do you object to skilled nursing, Dr. Dillon?"

"Well, if you want another nurse-"

Dillon looked quickly at Valerie.

"I won't have your nurses," Valerie cried.

"Oh yes. Yes. I'm going to telephone for two more. I'm going to wait till they come and give them their instructions."

Valerie flinched. It appeared to Reggie that Dillon gave her a nod. Valerie breathed deep. "You believe she is really in danger?"

"I know she's in great danger," said

Reggie slowly.

"Oh, very well, then." Valerie was pale. Dillon pushed a chair to her and she sank on it. "Very well. You do what you want."

"Of course he must," said Brett. "Then you'll take charge of the case now, Mr. Fortune?"

"Yes, I think so." Reggie looked at Dillon.

"You don't suppose I object?" Dillon said sullenly.

"It's awfully good of you, sir," Brett cried. "But I say—I didn't like to ask—but of course you'll stay here, then. Won't he, Val?" He turned to Valerie, miserably silent.

"What? Stay here? Yes, I suppose so." She dragged herself to her feet. "I'll tell them." She went wearily out.

"Well, you'll not want me any more."

Dillon stood up.

"You never know, you know," Reggie murmured. "Good night, doctor." But Dillon's departing back was unresponsive.

Smithson fidgeted. "My dear Fortune. I'm really very sorry. It is a most distressing affair. I—I hope you don't mind."

"No. I don't mind."

"I'm afraid you're rather disturbed?"

Smithson drew confidentially near.

"It is jolly queer she should be so bad," said Brett. Reggie considered them both with dreamy eyes. "You think so?" he murmured. "The telephone, please. Good night, Smithson."

Brett took him to the telephone in the hall. "Can't understand her being so knocked out, you know. She's always been as fit

as anything."

"Yes. Might look after my chauffeur, will you?" said Reggie, and took up the telephone. When he was done with it he went back to Mrs. Heath.

At dinner Valerie did not appear. Brett made stumbling eager apologies for her. She was awfully upset, of course. Mr. Fortune could see that. Of course, it was a frightfully queer business.

Reggie evaded the business. Reggie talked gardens, and escaped to receive the

nurses.

When he came at last to his own room he had the spouted cup and the jug of milk from Mrs. Heath's table. He examined the cup carefully under the light. Some tiny dark flecks like dust were dried in it. He tasted the milk with the tip of a cautious tongue.

Early in the morning he sent his chauffeur away with a packet for his hospital labora-

tory.

Brett was waiting for him in the breakfastroom, anxious and hearty. "I'm afraid you have been up a long time, sir. I heard you about. I hope she's not doing badly?"

"No, quite a good night."

"I say! That's splendid. Is she coming round?"

"Not yet. No. She's quieter. There's less distress. You might tell Miss Caryll."

"Yes, rather. Ought to buck her up, what? You know I believe she'd made up her mind it was all over."

Brett bustled away. When he came back, he was embarrassed. "Afraid she won't come down, sir. Awfully sorry. Seems as if she couldn't believe things were going all right. She is queer. You really think there

is a chance, don't you?"

"Oh yes. Yes. Quite a chance," said Reggie, and finished his coffee in a gulp and went into the garden with a cigar. He was profoundly miserable. He had been up too early. He ranked the cook of Tavington Park among the world's worst women. He did not see his way. When he can be brought to speak of this case he is bitter about it. His success, he will tell you, was due to simple moral worth unaided by intelligence: a humiliating thing.

His cigar soothed him. The autumn flowering of the roses was grateful. He wandered away to the wild garden and became more interested in the world. A pleasant laburnum walk; must be very genial in spring; bluebells under them; very benign when they hit off the flowering together; which they would miss when they could. A sad life, this life. He stopped suddenly. Someone had been cutting one of the laburnums. Why in wonder should anybody want sprays of laburnum in autumn? But there was a gap in the drooping leaves and seed-pods and the cuts were fresh.

He went back to the house. Brett was still at breakfast, in the cigarette stage. "I say, is there anything I can do, sir? Anything you want?"

"No. No. I'm going up to the patient."

"Oh, quite, yes. But I mean to say, I'll
be about. I expect Val's in her study."

Reggie went upstairs. There was a maid in the corridor. At Mrs. Heath's door stood the Persian cat, announcing haughtily that he wished to go in. "He does so fuss to be with mistress, doctor," the maid apologised.

Reggie stroked his majesty, who bit.

"Want your breakfast, old man?"

"It ain't that, sir. He ain't eat nothing hardly this two days. He won't touch his milk. He does miss her so."

The Emperor stood up and patted the handle of the door. Reggie went in with him and he sprang on to the bed and purred. A horrified nurse moved to him.

"No, I don't think so," Reggie murmured. The Emperor curled himself up,

sighed and shut his eyes. "Do you believe in omens, nurse? No, quits unscientific. But helpful." He bent over Mrs. Heath. She was still pale, but the sunken face had grown calm. She breathed sweetly. . . . He stood looking at the nurse as though she were not there.

" I thought she seemed to be doing well, sir?"

"Oh yes. Yes," Reggie murmured, and wandered out.

He tapped at Valerie's study and had no answer. He went in and shut the door behind him, looked about him with puzzled questing eyes. But there never was a room of less concealment: walls of books, chairs, table, and on that, as on the night before, a bowl of autumn foliage. "Oh, my aunt!" he muttered. Among the glowing maple and beech was a spray of laburnum. He stood frowning at it some while, then turned and moved here and there looking at the books which lay about. Miss Caryll's reading seemed to be in poetry and archaic: Rossetti, Italian poets, Catullus; there was also a vellum book of ancient folk-lore. Reggie took it up and opened it at a page headed ODIA AMICITIAEQUE RERUM SENSU CARENTIUM, and he read on. For that means "the hates and friendships of inanimate things." Half-way down the page he came upon the words Itaque dormientes sub cytiso aureo veneno mortali statim afficiuntur—" and thus those who sleep under the golden laburnum are at once stricken by a mortal poison," so lethal, the author explained, are the flowers and seeds of that tree. Reggie turned the pages. There was a book-plate with a coat of arms and Ex libris C. J. Heath. 1870. He heard a step, put the book down and, opening the door, came face to face with Valerie.

"I suppose you know that's my room!" she cried. "What do you want in there?"

"I thought I might find you," said Reggie. "I wanted to tell you Mrs. Heath is going on well now."

She was not soothed. The pale face flushed. "Of course she is. I knew she would. Dr. Dillon said you were making

a fuss about nothing."

"You think so?" Reggie murmured. She swept by him into the room, and he went downstairs and rang up his hospital. "Mr. Fortune speaking. I want Dr. Priestly. . . . Hallo, Priestly. Working on it? Good. Try for cytisine. Yes, cytisine."

"Good Lord," said the telephone. "Never had a case yet."

"Nor have I," said Reggie.

"Rather rustic method, isn't it?"

"I wouldn't say that," said Reggie. "Good-bye. Ring you up in the evening."

Valerie was at his elbow. "I'm sorry. Were you waiting for the 'phone?" She took it from him without a word. As he walked away into the library he heard her ask for Dr. Dillon.

The late C. J. Heath had amassed many books, and his taste, like Valerie's, was for the antique. There was a long shelf of old science, magic and folk-lore, vellum bound, like the book in Valerie's room, and in it a gap which that volume would fit. Reggie turned away from it and his round face had the anxiety of a puzzled child. He wandered aimlessly about the room and came back to the hall.

Valerie was talking to Brett, a sharp voice against cool remonstrance. "My dear girl, I can't tell him to go," Brett said. "I don't know why you——" Valerie stopped him. "Oh, hallo." He laughed embarrassment.

"I was just going out," Reggie explained.

"One or two things. Shan't be in to lunch.

I'll see Mrs. Heath again this evening."

"Dr. Dillon will be here," Valeric said

fiercely.

"Yes, yes. I may want him," Reggie

murmured, and strolled away.

He desired to see the rhododendron pool and he did not desire that anybody should show it to him. He found it easily, following the stream through the park in its deepening cleft till it became a wide sheet of water, one bank a sloping lawn, the other a cliff of green foliage. Upon that a path wound among clumps of rhododendrons, sometimes at the cliff edge. But he was not to see the pool alone. A man came out in front of him. "You'll excuse me, sir? Are you one of the family?"

"Oh no, no. Staying at the house."

"I see. You wouldn't mind giving me your name?"

The square face of Superintendent Bell looked round the rhododendrons. "Bless my soul!" it said. "Well, Mr. Fortune, fancy meeting you!"

"And the same to you," Reggie sighed.

"How are you, sir ?"

"Lonely, Bell, very lonely. It's a large and puzzlin' world."

"I didn't know you were on the case."



"Speakin' professionally—is there case?" said Reggie.

"That's what we'd like to know—ch, James?"

"I'm sure," Inspector James agreed.

"Yes, very natural. Very proper. And whose little idea was it there ought to be?"

"Well, sir, there's a Doctor Smithson here went to Inspector James and said his patient Mrs. Heath was down with shock and concussion from a fall over this place and he had reason to think she'd been attacked."

"Smithson?" Reggie murmured. "Well, well"

"That's all right, isn't it, sir?"

"Oh yes. Yes. Quite correct of Smithson. Only he didn't tell me." Reggie gazed at the compact form of Superintendent Bell as if it were strange and unreal. "I fear I have underrated Smithson."

"Something queer, Mr. Fortune?" said

Inspector James eagerly.

"I feel so young; so young and innocent," Reggie murmured. "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever! I'm not bein' clever at all. On the contrary. But very good. And it isn't com-

fortable." His voice rose plaintively. "I don't like it, Bell. Smithson sent for me and said his patient, Mrs. Heath—said all that—and he didn't like it and would I take it on, and I did. I'm so good."

"You mean he's not telling us the truth,

sir?" the Inspector cried.

"Oh no. No. I wouldn't say that. He hasn't told anything else. Mrs. Heath is sufferin' from shock and concussion. She has had a fall. She was found here. And he had reason to think there was foul play. But he's bein' rather careful."

"She says herself she was pushed over,

don't she, sir?"

"The nurse heard her say something about pushed. She hasn't spoken again."

"Do you think she'll die without speaking, sir?" asked the Inspector anxiously. "Looks to me that would leave us beat."

"Yes. Yes. The mind seems almost useless." Reggie sighed. "I'm not sure I've got a mind any more. Well, well. 'Do the work that's nearest, though it's dull at whiles.' Where did she fall?"

"We can give you that, anyway, sir." Bell took him to the edge of the cliff. "She was found there, below the broken bushes.



"Lord, no, sir. I don't say Mrs. Heath is well liked. She has her tempers. But nothing to signify." The Inspector hesitated. "Well, not unless you count Dr. Smithson. A bit o' feeling there. He didn't like her leaving him and having young Dillon for her doctor."

"No. Why did she?"

"The talk is he said something to her about Dr. Dillon going with Miss Caryll, and she wouldn't take it from him."

"Oh yes. And does Dr. Dillon go with

Miss Caryll?"

The Inspector sniggered. "I should say so. Fair gone on each other, those two. I don't mean to say but it's all quite regular. Only there's a bit o' gossip. The young lady's thought rather hot stuff, sir."

"And what do you think of Dr. Smithson

down here?"

"Well, not so much. He goes for a bit

of an old woman, you know."

"Yes. Yes. This bein' thus, you must have been rather surprised, Smithson got called in when Mrs. Heath was hurt."

The Inspector considered that. "I don't know—in a manner of speaking, maybe—kind of comic. But it happened quite natural. When Mr. Brett came down and found her in a bad way he sent for Dr. Smithson. You see, he was brought up here and he'd always been used to the Smithsons attending the family; he wouldn't know much about Dr. Dillon."

"Yes. Rather passing it on, aren't they?" Reggie sighed. "Brett sends for Smithson and Smithson sends for me and Smithson sends for you. And we can't send for anybody, so we have to nurse the baby ourselves. Well, well. 'Do noble things, not dream them all day long.' She did fall, and this is where she fell. Nobody yet visible had a grudge against her except Smithson. Was anybody about in the park when she fell?"

"Ah! That's where it gets tricky, Mr. Fortune," said the Inspector. "I thought you'd work your way to that sometime. That's what I went for at first."

"Yes, I'm not clever," Reggie sighed. "I told you. Only laborious. The brain is

almost negligible."

"Well, Miss Caryll and Dr. Dillon they come here pretty often. Dr. Dillon takes it on the way home from his rounds. Leaves his car out on the road—that path goes down to a stile—and meets the young lady for a bit of spooning." The Inspector winked.

Reggie considered him with sad dreamy

eyes. "" Makes a habit of it?"

"These things get talked about in a little place," the Inspector grinned. "Don't you see, when I heard Mrs. Heath had fallen into the pool, first thing I said to myself was, 'Where was Dr. Dillon?' I said."

"Yes. Very acute. Yes. And where

was he?"

"Ah! He was here that evening. Him and Miss Caryll. Down in that hollow. I've got a lad that saw 'em. Going on towards seven. And just after seven the gardener found her in the pool. They were here or hereabouts just when it happened. And they never said a word about it."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured.

"Did they tell you they were here, sir?" Bell said quickly.

"Oh no. No. They don't like me."

"And that looks nasty too, don't it?" the Inspector frowned. "I say, sir, you're having her watched careful?"

Reggie smiled. "Oh yes. Yes. I'm not clever but I am careful. Nobody's meddling with her any more. But if she does speak, she may not tell us who did it. She may not know."

"There's that," said the Inspector gloomily. "You said that. Then it beats me. I don't know what more we can do."

Bell was watching his Mr. Fortune. "What do you think yourself, sir?"

"I don't think," Reggie moaned. "The brain is wholly inactive. I am not happy, Bell. Je n'ai pas de courage. And I want my lunch. Oh, my aunt!" he mourned. "How I want my lunch. Why did I think of that!" He clutched Bell's arm. "I've not had any food for one long, awful day."

"Good Lord, sir!" Bell was deeply affected, knowing his habits. "Are you

"Not ill. No. Only downhearted. It began with the cat's milk, you know. But then there was the veal at dinner. And the scrambled eggs at breakfast. Very lingering. The intellect is confused. I wish you could hang the cook."

The Inspector laughed. "Sorry, sir. You come along down to the Forester.

They'll do you well."

Reggie considered him dreamily. "The simple life," he murmured. "The plain cold joint. And a green salad. Nothing made. And perhaps a little fruit. Could it be done?" His round eyes were pathetic. "In Tavington?" he sighed.

"You'll get the best cut o' beef in England," the Inspector chuckled. "You come

along and see."

"My dear fellow," said Reggie affectionately, and began to talk about the perfection of beef: not, for English cooking, the undercut: the sterner side of the sirloin: not crudely underdone. . . . The Inspector also had thoughts about beef. . . .

But Superintendent Bell meditated in silence, and when they came to the town and the Inspector went in to order the lunch, "Something queer about the house,

Mr. Fortune?" he said.

Reggie groaned. "Oh, my Bell! How can you? I was beginning to be happy. I wonder if they have any tarragon."

The *Forester* is Georgian red brick without and grim. But within there is one of the staircases up which Queen Elizabeth went to bed. Their table was spread in a little upper room of black oak walls, which looked over an orchard, and upon the table was a sirloin and two bowls of salad. Reggie looked. Reggie smiled. "Oh, my dear fellow!" Reggie cooed.

"I told them not to mix it, sir."
"How wise! How gracious!" Reggie purred and investigated the bowls. wonder—could there be a touch of chives? And a sprig of mint perhaps. Oh, tarragon!" He began to mix it, rapt and reverent. He gazed at the sirloin. "Land "Beer, I of hope and glory," he smiled. think. Only beer."...

He drank the last of his tankard. He contemplated the Inspector benignantly. "My dear fellow!" he murmured. coffee, perhaps? It would break the harmony. Is their brandy worthy of them? Yes, brandy, then. One small cigar?" He offered his case.

"I like my pipe, sir."

"You're always right," Reggie smiled.

The brandy was drunk. The pipes were lit. Reggie put his feet on a chair. "Well, well," he said. "Duty, stern duty. Referrin' to our conversation of even date-What's the theory? Dr. Dillon and Miss Caryll pushed her over, intendin' her demise. Why?"

"Well, that's easy," said the Inspector. "Miss Caryll had her motive all right. There's only her and Mr. Tom Brett for the old lady to leave her money to, and it's always been understood Miss Caryll was to have this place, and Dillon's her fancy man. He could do with the money too, I'll be bound. He hasn't a penny, by the way he lives."

"Yes. Motive clear and adequate. Take it another way. Miss Caryll and Brett stand to get the old lady's money. Miss Caryll was handy at the time she was pushed in. Brett was away. Brett didn't come to the place till after. Miss Caryll is again indicated."

"That's right, sir. And everyone always thought she'd get the most. She's always been the favourite. Oh, we can make it very nasty for Miss Caryll."

"Yes, that is so."

"But when it comes to proving she did it! Well, I ask you! Where's the jury that would convict on this?"

"It ought to be in Hades," said Reggie. "But you never know, you know." He

looked at Bell.

"If there's an inquest we'll have to put the evidence against her," Bell pronounced.

"It's a chance," Reggie sighed.

"It's the only one I see," said the Inspec-

Reggie considered him with dreamy eyes. "The road, you know. Somebody might have seen somebody on the road. Going into the park. Or coming out of it. You might do a bit of good."

"I'll work on it, sir." The Inspector stood up. "You're going back to the

house ? '

"Yes. Yes. I'll have to go back to the house," said Reggie drearily. there-till something happens." The Inspector departed.

"You've got something up your sleeve,

Mr. Fortune?"

"Yes. I don't know what it is. That's why I didn't bother him. Not a nice case. Whoever it is, didn't finish with her when she was pushed over. She's been poisoned since."

"Good Heavens!" Bell muttered. "That

looks like the doctor."

"It could be. Somebody who could get to her room. Perhaps somebody was frightened when she spoke. Perhaps somebody just meant to make sure. Perhaps well, not a nice case."

"What was the poison, sir?"

"I don't know. One of the alkaloids. I think she's had a dose of laburnum."

"Laburnum!" Bell gasped. "I never

knew that was a poison."

"Oh yes. Yes. Not much used in the poisoning profession. But you shouldn't eat laburnum, Bell."

"What put you on it, sir?"

"Well, it was the cat's milk. The cat wouldn't drink his habitual milk. Either he'd had some that tasted queer or he'd seen someone playing tricks with it."

"Who do you think did it?"

"The cat didn't tell me. I'm going back there to find out." He laughed uncomfortably. "Wish me luck, Bell."

"Don't let 'em get you, for Heaven's

sake!"

"Oh no. I 'as what they 'as. Poor me. You might come up after dinner. I'll want comfort."

When he came to the house, he went in by the library window. That book on the powers of laburnum and other inanimate things had been put back on the shelf. As he passed through the hall, Brett appeared. "Smithson's been, sir. He said he was sorry to miss you, but he was very busy."

Reggie took the stairs two at a time. But Mrs. Heath's tranquil face consoled him. He turned to the nurse. "She's been like this two hours, Mr. Fortune. Before that she was stirring. I believe she was half conscious. She looked at me in a puzzled way and muttered something like 'who pushed me?'"

"And that's that," Reggie murmured.

"I gave her some of the invalid food and her medicine, and she took it like a lamb and went off again. It seems almost like a natural sleep now."

"Dr. Smithson saw her before she

spoke?"

"An hour before. She was quite quiet. He said to be very careful. Nobody could

tell how it would go."

"Dear old Smithson," Reggie murmured. "Safety first. And very nice too. If you can pass the baby. No, not quite fair, nurse." He shook his head at her. "You'd be all right with Smithson. Go and have some tea. I'll stay with her a bit."

He did stay, though the nurse came back soon, stayed till twilight was closing in, but Mrs. Heath neither stirred nor spoke again. He sat by the window, his round face pale in the gloom and troubled, when another nurse whispered that Dr. Dillon had come. He rose stiffly. The nurse took him to Valerie's room. "One moment, one moment." He went downstairs to the telephone . . . "Fortune speaking. Hullo, Priestly. What about it?"

"You win," said the telephone. "We've found cytisine."

"Do I?" said Reggie drearily. "Thanks very much."

ery much.
"Want a report for the Public Prose-

cutor?"
"Heaven knows," said Reggie. "Good-

He turned away, to meet Brett. "I say, don't know if they told you, Dillon's here."

"Oh yes, yes. In your cousin's room." They went up together. Valerie and Dillon were talking as they came, silent as they went in.

"How are you?" Reggie drawled. "Taking Mrs. Heath at the end of your round, what?"

Dillon's sullen eyes flickered. "Thought you wanted to see me."

"Yes. Yes. We must have a consultation, doctor."

"Oh, I had better go?" Valerie cried.

"No. I want the family here."

"I didn't know I counted, Mr. Fortune."
"Go easy, Val." Brett put his hand on her arm. "What's the excitement? Mr.

Fortune don't bite."

"It's not my case, you know," Dillon scowled. "You've made that pretty clear, you and Smithson. I don't know why you want me."

"No. I'm going to tell you. Mrs. Heath has spoken twice. Each time she said she was pushed. So I have to assume her fall was not an accident. Anyone know anything about that?"

"Twice?" Valerie cried.

"When did she speak again?" said Dillon, and Brett looked at them and from them to Mr. Fortune.

"This afternoon. I hope she may say

 $\mathbf{more}.$

"She's going to get better?" Valerie cried wildly. "Oh, Pat!" She caught at Dillon and swayed.

"I say! You didn't think she could,

Dillon," said Brett.

"Hang it, I told you there was a chance," Dillon muttered.

"Did you think there was when I came?"

said Reggie quietly.

"Ah, how could a man tell?" Dillon flushed. "But what's the matter, then? If she'll recover, all's well. What's your solemn talk for?"

"If she does recover, that won't be the end of it, doctor. When I came she was being poisoned."

"Good Lord, sir!" Brett cried.

"Poisoned?" Dillon muttered. "What are you saying?"



"'Mrs. Heath has spoken twice,' said Mr. Fortune. 'Each time she said she was pushed. So I have to assume her fall was not an accident. Anyone know anything about that?'"

"I saw symptoms of alkaloid poisoning. I took her milk for analysis. It contained cytisine."

"Cyti-what?" said Brett. "Never

heard of it."

Reggie turned on him. "Heard of laburnum?" he asked. "Look." He pointed a finger at the bowl of foliage on the table. He drew out the spray of laburnum and held the seed-pods over his hand. "Yes. The seeds, I think. Crushed." He looked from one to the other. "You have a good deal of laburnum here, Mr. Brett. One of the trees has been cut quite lately. And in the house you have a Latin book explaining that laburnum is a deadly poison."

"You were in here this morning," Valerie said faintly. "You saw it,

then?"

"Yes. Yes. I was in your room this morning. As you complained. I've been in the garden. I've been in the library this afternoon. And also in the park, and—well, now I'm going to the library again. To write a report on the case which I shall send to the police. Now you see why I wanted to meet you—all." He looked from Dillon to Brett. "You understand your position?"

"I say! That's telling us you suspect somebody," Brett cried. "You ought to

let us know---"

"Ought?" said Reggie sharply. "How can you tell me what I ought to do?" He went out.

The library had a writing-table by the window. He switched the light on there, but for some time stood at the open window looking out at the dark. He drew a long breath, sat down and began to write. The faint mingled sounds of a country night disturbed him, a moth beating against the glass, an owl hooting, the whirr of a bat, and once and again he stopped to listen. There were footsteps: on the lighted patch of the garden a shadow came. He caught up the inkstand, flung it out, and sprang back against the wall as a shot cracked. From the far wall of the room came the clatter of shattered glass. Another shot was fired and on the report he heard a groan and

"I wonder," Reggie murmured, but he stayed still in the shadow.

For a moment it seemed that all the world was silent, then he heard the flutter of birds and the house was alive with voices and hurrying feet. "Praise God," he

muttered, and dropped into his chair

again.

People were running into the garden. He heard a cry of horror. Valerie's voice. Then she ran into the room. She put her hand to her eyes, she saw him. "Mr. Fortune!" she gasped. "You—oh—you know——"

Reggie put her into his chair, gently enough. "Don't go out again," he said, and left her.

There was a cluster of whispering servants outside. On the edge of the patch of light from the window, one man knelt by another.

"Yes. Too many of us, aren't there?" Reggie said quietly. "Go in, please. Please." He got rid of them. "Well, Dillon, what d'you make of it?"

Dillon looked up. "He was dead when I found him," he said hoarsely. "Look now. He shot himself, the fellow."

"Yes. Yes. He made sure this time."
"There were two shots, you mean? I thought I heard two. It's a queer thing. The man's all wet with what's not his blood."

"No. That's ink. I'm afraid I broke the inkstand. But you needn't mention the ink. It's irrelevant."

"You were trying to save him, sir?"

"No. No. I wasn't trying to save him. I was savin' myself at the moment. That first shot was for me."

"The mad fellow!" Dillon looked down

"The mad fellow!" Dillon looked down at the dead man with something of compassion. "But why would he?"

"I wonder," Reggie said. "You might

look at the revolver."

"The revolver, is it?" Dillon took the thing from the dead man's hand and turned it over. "What now?" he muttered. "Heavens! Ah, you'll have to know it, Mr. Fortune. It's my own pistol."

"Oh, yours. Well, well."

"You thought it would be?"

"I wouldn't say that. No. I thought it would be yours or Miss Caryll's."

"You're as clever as the devil. It's my own. I gave it to the girl when she was plagued by her aunt having notions of burglars. Ah! There's no hiding it from you, 'twas common talk she had it. We would laugh about it with the old lady."

"Yes. Very natural. Brett might have

had a laugh out of it too."

"But why would be shoot you, sir?"

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow! If I was shot, and there was a revolver

lying about with your name on it, and everyone knew you'd given Miss Caryll a revolver—well where would you be? But it would have cleared Mr. Brett very neatly. The only man who had a notion Mr. Brett was murdering his aunt would be lying nice and quiet underground. Yes. I was thinkin' of that while I sat waitin' for Mr. Brett in the library. Yes. Wearin' moments."

"You made sure it was he that drugged her? I'll tell you now, I thought you were tryin' to frighten the girl and me."

"I'm sorry. I was quite fair. You see, there never was any proof. If I frightened you all, I thought one of you would break and I'd get it. And it was so. If you want to know, I never thought Miss Caryll would be the one, Dillon." He smiled and held out his hand. "Well, well. We'd better get him into the house."

Somebody was at the door. Superintendent Bell was heard asking for Mr. Fortune. "Come along, come along. My dear Bell, how professional! The perfect policeman. It's all over. But you can help us in with

the body."

He brought Dillon back to the library. Valerie sat in the chair where he had put her, huddled and small, and save for the light on the writing-table the rest of the room was still dark. The broken glass of the picture cracked under their feet and she gave a cry. Dillon came to her.

"Yes. That is indicated." Reggie turned away. "And a small cigar for me." He stood by the window smoking.

"Mr. Fortune!" said a small and shaking

voice. "Oh, why did he?"

"Don't you know?" Reggie turned.
"What do you mean? But I always
thought he—he liked me. That's why I
couldn't bear him."

"Yes. Quite. And as you couldn't bear him that was to be the end of you. He didn't want you to have Tavington, he didn't want you to have—a life. So he tried to kill your aunt by the pool when you and Dillon were known to be there. If she died there would have been a nasty charge against you."

"But Brett wasn't here then!" Dillon cried.

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow. He didn't show till after. It's easy having a sort of alibi if you have a car."

"But you don't know," Valerie objected.

"You think not? Well, he came here and she wasn't dead. On the contrary, she spoke. She might be going to say too much

for Brett. Something had to be done. So he got some laburnum seeds and put them in the milk you were giving her. Very neat and clever. If it wasn't detected, her death would go as due to the fall and Dillon and you would have to answer for that. If it was—well, you were nursing her, and who was likely to use laburnum for a poison but the girl who read queer old Latin books?"

"You did think it was me," she cried.
"No. No. That's not nice of you. I'm not clever, but I am careful. I knew it wasn't you as soon as I knew what it was. When I found the laburnum in your room and the book. Because I didn't think the book was there the night before, and I knew the laburnum wasn't. These clever fellows.

"That book. I saw it this morning. I couldn't understand it. I put it back in the

they will be too ingenious."

library."

"Yes, I noticed that." Reggie smiled. "Yes. That was a minor problem. I thought that was you. Very dangerous, being innocent. You never know what to do."

"But you did think I—I poisoned her. When we were talking upstairs—before—

you were horrible."

"Yes, I tried to be. It wasn't for you. I had no evidence against him, you know. I had to make him—break."

"Ah." She drew in her breath. "It's terrible. You meant—what he did?"

"No. No. I took my chance," said Reggie.

"Oh—poor Tom," she shuddered. "God forgive him," said Dillon.

Reggie looked at them. "Well, well. If you say so," he murmured. He took a step forward, lifted Valerie's cold hand a moment and left them. . . .

In the morning he stood surveying Mrs. Heath and her cat, both peacefully asleep. He tickled the Emperor's inner curves and received a mild curse. "Yes. They're doin' quite nicely." He ran downstairs to the telephone.

"Mrs. Fortune, please. Hallo, Joan. Are the mothers over? Do you love me, Joan?"

"No," said the telephone. "Nobody

does. Nobody could."

"Never mind. 'Do the work that's nearest, though it's dull at whiles.' I shall be nearest by lunch-time. One of our better lunches, please. . 'Do noble things,' Joan, 'not dream them all day long.' Same like me."

"Rissoles," said the telephone. "And rice pudding. Just like you."



"She had the loveliest head he had ever seen, set exquisitely on a very slender throat."

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

T was absurd, of course, for Gerald Wainwright to say to himself that he couldn't imagine what had induced him to go to the Lido, for he knew perfectly well the reason was Gloria Angmering, who had exercised over him a most complete but inappropriate fascination. But chance had drawn him into that pseudo-artistic "smart" circle of hers, and like many another he had fallen a victim to her beauty. And he, it is to be presumed, had amused her, probably because he was outside her experience. At any rate, by the hour she talked to him, uttering those inconsequent comments, those thumbnail criticisms which had beguiled far more astute men than Gerald into the notion that she was a woman not only of wit but of wisdom. By her he had been drawn into her hurly-burly of friends, painters and poets, Near Eastern princesses, ducal Russians, turned dressmakers or musicians, under-secretaries of legations, polyglot cosmopolitans and ladies lovely and contemptuous. At least so Gerald felt them to be, for try as he might he could not cope with their conversational jargon. Vainly he attempted the reading of certain novels; went to galleries and stared at

pictures that in his eyes had no more relation to life than a patchwork quilt, and, with Mrs. Angmering beside him, hearkened with an amazed weariness to the music of Bartok and Milhaud. It was useless. He remained unchanged; Gerald Wainwright, stockbroker, aged twenty-nine, good-natured, slow, obstinate, personable in appearance, and of adequate income. But though he was radically unchanged he was influenced to the extent that when Gloria suggested he should join her party at the Lido he accepted the invitation, abandoning three weeks on one of the best moors in Perthshire.

But it wasn't a success. He loathed the place with its glare, heat and dust; and for him Venice offered no haven of escape. And somehow hourly contact with Gloria's friends made them almost nauseating. They didn't do away from London. They appeared more than ever wrong against a natural background; even under the theatrical blue skies of an Italian summer and on the shores of this tepid sea. And the diversions of the place did not appeal to him. He was unamused by playing tennis, wading in shallow water or basking on the

sands, clothed inadequately. Besides the sun blistered his shins and shoulders. They were most confoundedly painful.

But these things might have been borne—and during the first day while he wandered on the shore with Mrs. Angmering, almost he had forgotten the Perthshire moors—had it not been for the Rumanian poet who was discovered one afternoon when they had crossed to Venice on what Gloria called a "quest for the Baroque." A word with which Gerald had become familiar, but whose precise meaning he had not been able to discover.

The gondola, having traversed innumerable tortuous and unsavoury canals, stopped before the façade of a mouldering church, whereupon Mrs. Angmering, stepping ashore, exclaimed in a kind of ecstasy: "How gloriously, how unashamedly rococo! My dear, look at that Moses with a curly beard and a robe like whipped cream."

Immediately Gerald began to sulk. "Suppose the rotten statue's robe was like whipped cream?" And he refused very ungallantly to accompany Gloria into the church, remaining in the gondola, furiously smoking cigarette after cigarette.

He had smoked half a dozen when sho reappeared, but no longer alone, for walking beside her was a stranger in the shape—in Gerald's eyes at least—of a most unpleasant-looking young man. He was hatless and his brown hair was far too luxuriant; he wore a little beard that went absurdly with his youthful features, and his clothing, consisting of an old pair of trousers and a brown jersey, struck Gerald as being by no means what should be to any man's taste.

"Who the deuce has she found now?"

he groaned.

He learnt immediately, for Mrs. Angmering rushed forward, demanding:

"Gerald, the most remarkable coincidence! Who do you think I've found?"
"Heaven knows," Gerald said.

"Sogol!" she cried shrilly, like a female railway porter crying the name of a station. "The Rumanian poet. He is staying at some frightful pensione and is desperately ill. Don't you think he looks desperately ill? I have arranged for him to come with us to the Imperial. Dear Sogol! The most marvellous poems. I met him in Paris."

Obviously Gerald could say nothing, couldn't dictate to Gloria whom she invited to the hotel as her guest, but he raged furiously within, and during the return voyage

in the gondola the last shreds of his adoration of Mrs. Angmering vanished.

It was quite a lengthy voyage, for, at her orders, the gondoliers took them across to the *pensione* on the Giudecca where the nefarious-looking poet was staying; for apparently it was arranged that he should be immediately transferred to the Imperial.

To this end Mrs. Angmering handed him a sheaf of notes with which to pay his bill. He took them without a word and entered the pensione. He was absent ten minutes, during which Gloria indulged in a monologue concerning Sogol's genius, charm and impoverishment. When he reappeared he was carrying a large parcel wrapped in sheets of the Corriere and a cardboard box tied across the middle with string, so tightly that the lid gaped at either end like the mouth of an expiring fish.

"Isn't he delicious?" Gloria exclaimed. Then, when the two objects had been disposed of, she made a place for Sogol beside her and broke into an animated conversation with the poet, only interrupting it to turn to Gerald with, "Sogol wants to smoke. Do give him a cigarette."

He handed his case to the Rumanian and resumed his inconsidering stare across the lagoon. But in a moment he felt a touch on his arm.

"Gerald! Sogol has no matches," Gloria

protested.

"Confound Sogol!" Gerald said as he handed over his matches. At which Gloria pouted. But Sogol said nothing as he struck a match and then put the box in his pocket.

Then undoubtedly was the time when Gerald should have been firm with himself and quitted the dazzling and sophisticated beach of the Lido. But he was obstinate by nature and not willingly would be accept his dismissal from Mrs. Angmering. "Hang it all, there is such a thing as pride," he told himself. But whatever his pride he found it difficult not to feel that he was in the background, for Mrs. Angmering did not appear even to notice him. She was absorbed by Sogol. Likewise, to Gerald's amazement, were the rest of the party. They declared he was an original, "a genius"; he had the most remarkable soul and the most remarkable facility of expression. But as that was in French—a language Gerald did not know so much as you would notice-he was unable to verify it. But certainly Sogol chattered away while Gloria and her gang clustered around him. The women gave him smiles, the men gave him drinks. He had an excellent time.

On the evening following the Rumanian's installation at the Lido, Gerald could restrain himself no longer. Mrs. Angmering had allowed him one dance ("Sogol will be lonely," she protested. "He doesn't dance. So original"), but when the music ceased Gerald would not permit her to return to where Sogol sat drinking a massagrande and talking to a prima donna of the Russian ballet. Instead he led her to a distant corner of the terrace which had the most uninspiring view of the backs of the bathingboxes. But Gloria was inspiration enough. Very magnificent she looked in a deep blue dress the colour of the night sky; and around her throat were her famous emeralds. More emeralds hung from her ears; and a cabochon emerald as large as a grape was on her finger.

Gerald taxed Gloria. There was a scene. At first she pretended innocence. hadn't intended to be unkind to Gerald. She was delighted that he had come to the They were friends. Oh, surely they were friends? Wasn't he-with an air of surprise—enjoying himself? So many charming people. It was absurd that he expected her to talk to him and dance with him all the time. What was the matter? And then he let himself go. He upbraided Sogol. "A dirty little sponger," he called him. And other things. And Gloria was perfectly furious. "I wouldn't trust him a yard," said Gerald. "I would trust him with my life," said Gloria. And their voices rose in quite an unseemly fashion. She said that Gerald was domineering and brutal, and her eyes flashed as brightly as her emeralds. Anon they parted with a sort of frozen dignity. Gloria went back to the dancers, and Gerald straight to his room.

And that, of course, should definitely have been the end of it. He should have packed up at once and returned to England. He could have got back in time for the fag end of the shooting. And he might have done so, had he not on his way to his bedroom seen a very beautiful vision. . . .

Although appearances may suggest otherwise, there are ladies of all sorts at the Lido. There are fond mothers and faithful wives even though they wear black satin pyjamas at luncheon. There are, indeed, all kinds of ladies at the Lido, but this one particular lady of Gerald's vision was unexampled. She was so demure, so fragile; and she had the loveliest head he had ever seen, set

exquisitely on a very slender throat, and eyes of a deep and alluring melancholy. But they did not respond to his glance that night when they encountered in the corridor. Neither did they the following morning, for Gerald could not find her, search as he might up and down the beach.

Finally Gerald, hot and exhausted after his vain pursuit, took to the mild sea and there he found her, sitting on one of the swings which dangle just above the water, whereon it is the custom for the Lidoites

gaily to disport themselves.

She sat there abstracted, it seemed, swinging idly, one foot feathering the water of the pale, silk-smooth sea. She was clad in a black maillot, cut most decorously; a black satin scarf was twined round her golden hair; she wore no jewels. And she needed none.

Almost Gerald gasped at the sight of her. Then she looked in his direction. Immediately he clutched at one of the posts which supported the swing. He might have been the drowning man clutching at the traditional straw. Very faintly she smiled.

"Ripping morning," he hazarded.

She nodded her head—just. But she did not smile again.

"Rippingly warm," Gerald went on. But this time she did not nod. Instead she turned away, her eyes following the porpoiselike progress of an immense German through

the tranquil water.

"Glorious," said Gerald vaguely. The lady continued to avert her head and Gerald had to admit defeat. He did so by swimming away with the utmost rapidity. Arrived on shore, he threw himself on the sand, which incidentally seemed hot as flame, his eye fixed on the marine swing. And he waited, it must have been almost an hour, until the lady emerged from the water and passed within a yard of him without a look in his direction.

It was most discouraging, and continued to be so. In vain Gerald secured a table next to hers at luncheon. He might not have existed. Without a single glance at him the lady partook of her déjeuner; an omelette, fruit and a glass of Vichy water. Afterwards she went to the lounge. Gerald did likewise and watched while she wrote a seemingly interminable letter. Later she bathed again. Likewise Gerald. that evening, firmly deserting Gloria Angmering and any of her acquaintance, once more he followed the lady to the restaurant, where she took a solitary meal under his eyes, and then scorning the vicinity of the jazz band, she retired to the terrace and sat in apparent absorption of the full moon shining with dramatic brilliance on the waters of the Adriatic. Likewise, but without pleasure, did Gerald.

He was by now immensely intrigued by the lady. To his admiration and enthusiasm for her most distinctive beauty—and his volatile emotions had been caught on the rebound following his rebuff from Gloria and the transference of her smiles to Sogol—was added a profound curiosity with regard to this Lonely Lady. For so he called her. And so it seemed to him that she was. For at the Lido it is exceptional for a lady of such manifest beauty and distinction to be solitary; not at least for very long.

And there was something about her, indefinable though it might be, which rendered her entirely different from the other sojourners of the place. An air of mystery, of sadness, even of tragedy. Gerald invested her with romance, which is always danger-She fired his usually sluggish imagination. He began to invent stories about her, to evolve her history. There must, surely, be a series of disastrous and pathetic events which had moulded that wistful expression on her features, that look in her eves? She had some secret, some terrific sorrow. Why otherwise was she so aloof, so reserved, perpetually evading any contact with people? Yet if that were the case, why in the world should she choose such an environment as the Lido in which to indulge her grief? What sort of grief? Had she lost someone dear to her, husband or lover? Or was she expecting someone who never came? haps that was it. She was waiting.

Yes, undoubtedly, Gerald was intrigued. She was so distinguished, so fine, so rare. She shone like a rare jewel among fakes; for so Gerald now considered all the other ladies of the shore. Almost they sickened him. And Gloria Angmering more than all. Indeed he scarcely spoke to her or to any of her friends. And presently they avoided speaking to him. Not unnaturally, for he was exceptionally boorish in his behaviour towards them. The only person who existed for him indeed was the Lady, of whose name he was ignorant, for he resisted the temptation to make any inquiry concerning her. That he considered would be a kind of sacrilege. Resolutely he curbed his curiosity.

But a day or two later his curiosity was most painfully aroused by the sight of the Lonely Lady in converse with the abominable Sogol. They were walking up and down in front of the bathing-cabins, talking, it appeared, not merely amicably, but with an absorbed interest. And now the lady's face was no longer grave; it was alight with interest and amusement. Once Gerald heard her deliciously fresh laughter. He felt infuriated. He swore, not quite under his breath, and the next second swung round at the sound of Gloria Angmering's chuckle of amusement.

"What very naughty words, Gerald," she said. "The reason?"

A moment he didn't know what to say. Simply he stood facing her, feeling a considerable fool. Then a look of surprise came into her eyes. She was staring behind him.

"Oh, Gerald," she exclaimed, "whoever is Sogol talking to? Such a dowdy-looking little thing."

Gerald swore again.

"Really!" Mrs. Angmering protested, but without conviction. Her eyes were still fixed on the pair before them.

"Dowdy!" Gerald exclaimed. "You call her dowdy! The most charming woman on the whole of this beach."

"You know her?" Gloria inquired. "That explains a lot, then. Why, you have been such a boor. And now I come to look again, perhaps she isn't quite so unattractive. Her eyes. Yes. But very, very wicked looking."

"They are tragic eyes," Gerald said. "She is terribly unhappy. Alone. Waiting."

And at these words, so unlike Gerald's usual pronouncements, Gloria Angmering did not know whether to smile or suggest that he should consult a doctor. Finally she did neither.

"But that's absurd. They are not in the least tragic. She does not look in the least unhappy. Certainly she is not alone," she corrected.

"She has been until now. She hasn't spoken to a soul for the last three days."

"And anyhow Sogol will cheer her up."
"What induced her to talk to him!"
Gerald exploded. "But of course she didn't.
He butted in. No sense of decency.
Wouldn't see that she's not the sort who—"

But remembering his attempted conversation when the Lady was on the swing, Gerald felt compelled not to finish his sentence.

"But you want to talk to her, don't you?

Here is the opportunity." And flourishing her sunshade, Mrs. Angmering called to the pair who were, it happened, only a few paces away.

The Rumanian and his companion approached. They made an odd pair. Sogol garbed in purple pyjamas a size too large for him, his little beard jutting above

a turned-up collar; the lady exquisitely simple in a peignoir. Yet somehow Gerald was jealous Sogol.

He began speaking in rapid French, which annoved Gerald still more. And the unpleasant thought entered his mind that possibly the Lonely Lady was unacquainted with English. He was stirred to action. Without waiting for Sogol's introduction - though conceivably his gabbled words, the gesture of his thin hands was that—he turned directly to the Lady.

"So lucky," he began. "I mean that you should know the fellow, because I've been wanting to know

you for days."

"How charming!" replied the Lady in English with little trace of accent.

"But I thought I never should get the chance. You see——" Gerald continued.

"Oh, I have seen," smiled

the Lady.

"And now here's my chance. Funny though, it should be Sogol who——"

"You do not like him ? "

Gerald gave a glance over his shoulder. Angmering was already deep in conversation with the poet.

"Can't say I do. And

you ? "

The lady shrugged her shoulders.

"There are so many things one does not like," she said. "Why trouble about them?"

"It struck me that you don't par-

ticularly care about the Lido," Gerald said. "Perhaps. But one must be bored somewhere, must one not?"

"Bored? You! That's absurd." Gerald

was positively fierce.

"So many things are boring. For weeks, for months, one is tortured with boredom, and then-"



"The Rumanian and his companion approached. They made an odd pair. Sogol garbed in purple pyjamas a size too large for him.

"And then-" Gerald asked hopefully.

"Something even more boring happens," said the Lady.

Gerald looked considerably dispirited.

"Is this Sogol chap an old friend of yours?" he asked aimlessly.

"I knew him quite well once," the Lady conceded. "We had at one time a mutual

ing some refutation of Sogol's attraction.

"It is possible that we shall once more find something of interest and value," she said. And then with one of her rare and,



interest—of quite considerable value. But I have not seen him for more than two years."

"And now that you have seen him again?" Gerald persisted, foolishly intent on obtain-

for their rarity, so specially adorable smiles, "Do not let us discuss him. There are other things in the world."

"Not altogether boring?" Gerald inquired hopefully.

"Not altogether boring," the Lady admitted, and looked at him. Whereupon Gerald thought with a sense of outrage and fury of Mrs. Angmering's suggestion that the Lady had wicked eyes. They were the most beautiful eyes he had ever seen. And following this discovery he spent a most pleasant half-hour, wherein his interest and his admiration for the Lady rapidly increased. She was the most charming, the most delightful companion, so understanding, so sympathetic, yet tantalisingly aloof. And about her was an air of pensiveness, of half-masked sadness. More than ever he wondered as to her history and her secret. But she gave no clue.

Presently Gerald asked her name.

"But why should you wish to know that?" she returned. "Besides, I have so many names. Some when I am good, and others when I am bad, and still others when I am not well. I am Magnolia when I am ill."

She laughed, and Gerald thought of a phrase one of Gloria's poets had coined to describe a woman's laughter! "A peal of

faery horns." . . .

"You know," she continued, "one does the most absurd things sometimes in order to live. I suppose one must. But sometimes it seems so much easier to die. And then an opportunity comes and you take it because, after all, its rather fun. You see things you want."

"What kind of things?"

"A motor-car. Or a ridiculous little

country cottage-or pearls."

"You never wear jewels," Gerald protested.

The Lady half closed her eyes medita-

"But the jewels you see other women wearing can be extremely attractive," she murmured. And then before Gerald had time to offer to present her with the most fabulous things in the way of necklaces and earrings and what not, she rose to her feet and with simply a wave of her hand skimmed away. And he was so surprised that she was out of sight before he could attempt to follow her.

And he never saw her again.

He looked for her, of course, everywhere about the hotel and the shore that day—but vainly. And that evening he inquired of the maître d'hôtel where was the lady who usually sat at the table by the window. The man said that he did not know, and

took it upon himself to go to the bureau and make inquiries. Presently he returned, and approached Gerald just as he was about to eat the minute steak which he had ordered.

"Excuse me, sir," he said. "The lady who had the table by the window left Venice

this evening."

"Gone?" Gerald exclaimed foolishly and so loudly that several of the diners glanced in his direction.

"Yes, sir. She left with a Rumanian gentleman, Monsieur Sogol," the maître

d'hôtel observed.

"Sogol!" Gerald cried, and several more diners looked in his direction. And in a moment every occupant of the restaurant had its eyes fixed on his table as Gloria Angmering swept through the room like a golden cloud, so shimmering was her brocaded dress. But it was a rain-cloud nevertheless, for tears were streaming from her eyes. She was in a condition of extreme agitation.

"Gerald, have you heard?" she wailed when already she was some paces from the

table. "Sogol——"

"I don't care a sou about the little blighter," Gerald said. But that, of course, was a lie. He was more furiously jealous than ever in his life. That she, the lovely and Lonely Lady, should have given even a thought to the creature, that——

"But my emeralds!" Mrs. Angmering cried hysterically. "My emeralds! Gone!" And once more Gerald repeated "Gone?"

"Oh, don't you understand? I lent them to Sogol. He was writing a poem about jewels. Their hard colours. He said that for inspiration he must have gems before him, in his hands. So I gave him the emeralds. He took them to his room after tea. And now he has taken them altogether. He left the most insulting note. Raving about that horrible girl you were so fascinated by. They've gone together. With my emeralds!"

And quite overcome with chagrin and anger, the beautiful Gloria Angmering collapsed on to the chair which Gerald had vacated and burst into a passion of weeping. And though it is true that many strange things happen at the Lido, this was so strange an event—a beautiful lady in gold brocade, her face buried in her hands within six inches of a rapidly cooling minute steak, and a gentleman standing at her side biting his lip in the most approved style of melodrama—that there was considerable consternation, and a number of those present forgot to proceed with their expensive

dinners and left their wine untasted in their

It was, moreover, a scene with which even the most experienced of maîtres d'hôtel felt himself powerless to cope. But at length it resolved itself. With a final, shattering sob Mrs. Angmering rose to her feet and put out her trembling hand towards the watchful Gerald.

"Oh, please," she whispered. "The air! Air!"

Obediently Gerald took the proffered hand and led her towards the great windows which opened on to the terrace. Before them walked the stately maître d'hôtel sweeping aside the waiters from their path. It had something of the look of a royal procession.

Without, Gerald led the dazed Mrs. Angmering to a seat and for a while they sat in silence, staring before them across the dim spaces of the Adriatic, whereon, faintly visible in the starlight, lay three Venetian fishing-boats with high sails, motionless and beautiful as birds come to rest on the smooth water.

But we cannot penetrate the thoughts which occupied the minds of these two in the long silence which had fallen upon them. It was Gloria who eventually broke it.

"We have been fooled, Gerald," she said. "Both of us. Sogol has fooled me, and your Lonely Lady almost incredibly deluded vou. We had our opinions of them. They have been proved false. These two whom we admired—Sogol for his art, the Lady for her loveliness—have proved to be vulgar intriguers—and thieves. It appears that the management have had a careful watch upon the Lady ever since she arrived. I fancy she played her part too well. Perhaps we all do that."

"But what is one's part?" Gerald asked listlessly. He had no idea at what Gloria was driving. Besides, suddenly he was remembering certain remarks of the Lonely Lady's. He did not care to contemplate their possible significance . . .

"To be deceived. Yet why not?" Gloria continued, speaking, it seemed, to herself. "At least to be deceived is better than deceiving ourselves, which is what we usually do."

"Does one?" Gerald said, stupidly enough.

"But of course. You fancied that you

were in love with me. And I, for several weeks, fancied that I was in love with you -to give an unimportant instance-

"Unimportant?" Gerald repeated. But he was not paying much attention. Somehow he was enthralled by those three motionless ships with their painted sails lost there on the water.

"And I fancied that I was immensely interested in these people one collects about one, and all the trumpery bits of art they did. Their little spurts of wit, and their vices, and their ambitions. And I fancied that they thought I was clever and more beautiful than the dawn, and didn't only care for me because I have quite a quantity of money. And I fancied that I liked this place. And the Baroque and the whole-tone scale, the novels of Paul Morand. Things like that.

"I never did," Gerald said.

And then Gloria Angmering grew graver and graver, and while the folk in the restaurant finished dining she talked on the most serious subjects. Of her soul, of life and of death, of pain and of the beauty there is suddenly to be discovered, as in that vision of three motionless ships. Even she murmured something concerning vanity of vanities. . . .

And Gerald listened with a queer absorption, between his lips an unlighted cigar.

And presently—at least so one likes to believe-when the fair ladies and their squires came out upon the terrace they were hushed into silence by the sight of these two people discussing deep yet simple things. The waiters with their trays went about on tiptoe. A gentleman who was drunk felt ashamed of himself. And a lady who that day had received a gift of pearls suddenly deemed them inconsiderable. And presently when the dance orchestra came to their rostrum on the terrace, they set down their saxophones and, seizing violins, played something by Bach. And from the sea came a breeze fresh and sweet, and the ships sailed away, vanishing towards the rising moon.

All this according to the legend. But one may not vouch for its absolute veracity. All that is certain is on the following morning Gerald set forth en route for Perthshire, and Gloria Angmering telegraphed three hundred words to the insurers of her

emeralds.

• • THE • • • ONE MAGAZINE

By BARRY PAIN

• ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

S the train started the door of my carriage was thrown open and a suit-case entered hurriedly, followed by a gentleman who seemed to be propelled by some external force such as a porter, and sat down abruptly on the floor.

I watched him for a minute or so as he remained seated. He was quite young, well-dressed, and looked annoyed. Then I

resumed my newspaper.

He rose at length, hoisting his suit-case on to the seat by his side. He brushed himself and glared at me furiously.

"I have not hurt myself, sir—thank you

for your kind inquiries," he said.

"Made none," said I, returning to my

paper. "Not interested."

It might at first sight seem that I was rude, but remember there had seemed to be every probability that I should have the carriage to myself for the whole of my journey—that is the only reason why I travel first class. This pestilential fellow had ruined everything.

Just about ten minutes afterwards I heard a sniffling noise and, looking up, saw that my companion was apparently weeping. It was a position to which I was not used, but

I was as kind as I could be.

"What do you think you're bleating at?" I asked him.

He replied by telling me the following story. Once he had got his teeth into it I doubt if I could have stopped him without hitting him. He seemed a poor worm. I tell the story in his own words, just as he told it to me, suppressing my own interruptions.

You might perhaps think that I am the very image of a successful man. No? Well, I was. I never had any success before and I don't suppose I shall ever have any

again. The world has not been very kind to me. Even if I try to get into a train—well, you could see for yourself.

0

In my younger days I did not do well at school and I did worse at Cambridge. One way or another I did not see eye to eye with the authorities and it is not putting it too strongly to say that I was asked to go. If you think this failure brought me any sympathy from my family you are mistaken. They used to take it in turns to tell me they

were disgusted with me.

I had to do something. I decided to go to London and to become a journalist. I called at several publishing offices and I wrote to others asking the editors if they wanted any journalising done, because if so I could quote a fair price for it. I never got an answer to any of these letters and so I became a free-lance. When you are a free-lance you send your stuff along to any editor you happen to think of, and if you enclose a stamped and addressed envelope and he's not too busy, he sends it back again. I never had any work of mine accepted.

But one day at last I made a sudden

success of journalism.

I saw an advertisement in the newspaper: "Man wanted to edit magazine." That was all, except the address at the end of it. The address was Berkeley Square, and that looked to me promising. So I decided to waste no time.

I breakfasted hurriedly on a gin-and-Angostura and off I went. I think I got my answer to the advertisement in first, and, what is more, I was engaged. I was engaged by Mr. Sturt, the American millionaire. Think of that. After he'd seen me he didn't want to see any of the others. Am I a fool? Not likely.

I was shown into the room where Mr.

Sturt was breakfasting. Being a millionaire, and the month being February, he was breakfasting on strawberries. He looked worried and miserable, as he generally did.

"I want you to edit a magazine," he

said. "Can you?"

"Yes," I said, "I can."

"What you've got to do," he said, "is to

could always get somebody who could do the reading and writing for me, and they didn't charge much either. But things are different now. I've learned to read pretty well anything. I've also done something at writing. I sign my name quite easily now. Punctuation and spelling I've never aspired to.

"One day I thought I'd like to see a



"I watched him for a minute or so as he remained seated. He was quite young, well-dressed, and looked annoyed."

carry out my ideas. Let me tell you that when I was twenty-six—and that is not so many years ago—I could neither read nor write. I hadn't bothered with it. The only thing I wanted in my business was arithmetic, and I'd got that all right. I could make figures and read figures. There's no money in reading or writing. I found I

magazine, so I went into a shop and bought one, picking the first I saw. It cost threepence. I took it back here with me, opened it, and out fell a paper pattern for a pair of baby's knickers. There was a story about a rector, but I began in the middle of it. And there were several paragraphs of wise advice. If you wanted to know how to take black-

heads out of moths, or to get moths out of your clothes, or how to get anything out of anything, that magazine was ready for you. I didn't want it and I burned it.

"I don't want any magazine which any Tom, Dick, or Harry can buy. I want my magazine made for me only, and I don't intend that anybody else shall see it at all. What would you call it?"

"Well," I said, "if the magazine is to be for one person, you might call it 'The One

Magazine.' "

"Do you ever think of anything brighter than that? Because if you don't I expect I shall have to fire you. I've talked the matter over with my secretary and he will arrange about the printing. You'll get £100 for every number yourself and you'll produce a number every month."

"And if I did not meet your views," I said. "what notice would I get?"

"Five to ten minutes, according to whether I was in a hurry or not."

"And what am I to pay my staff?"

"Nothing. That's what an editor's there for. All you've got to do is to kid them that it's really a compliment to themselves. Why, if people could make money by writing we should never be able to get a day's honest work done. I want the best quality all through, mind you. Don't try to slip anything of your own into it, because I might guess and it would make me cross. Now I don't want to talk any more about this. You can go up to the secretary's room and find out. You'll have your own office, of course. Good morning. Thank you for coming."

He made a slosh at the bell by his side and his butler appeared instantly. Mr. Sturt jerked his thumb in my direction.

"Take that up to the secretary, Balderson. Get an empty room and furnish it like an office. See?"

"Certainly, sir. Very good, sir," said Balderson. And I followed him out of the room

When we were outside Balderson looked at me carefully from head to foot, and I think he disliked me.

"'Struth!" said Balderson. And without another word led the way upstairs.

Balderson opened the door of the secre-

tary's room without knocking.

"Mr. Sturt has sent you this," he said, indicating me with his thumb. "He'll go into the empty room next yours, and it will be ready to-morrow morning. Tell him not to go to the front door again, and

see that he don't forget it. That's all, I think."

I stepped forward and shook the secretary by the hand, for we had recognized one another. He was Cheever, Cheever of John's, who was up at Cambridge with me. He drank too much, but he had got through his Tripos all right, which nobody had expected.

"This is a surprise," I said. "Have you been Mr. Sturt's secretary for long?"

"Not so long as I hope to be. It's a job that suits me. And what have you been doing?".

"In a manner of speaking, I've been a

journalist."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, I've not yet had anything taken, but just now I've been offered the editorship of Sturt's magazine."

"Have you?" said Cheever.

"I shall have to think it over, naturally."

"And I'll come out and have one too," said Cheever, putting on his hat. "Follow me and take notice. This is the way you get into this house to-morrow morning."

We went down a narrow flight of stairs

and out at a side door.

"This is the staff entrance," said Cheever.
"I use it. Balderson uses it. So does
Hippell when he's here for the cinema, and
Dullimy's Intelligent Mice, and so on. You'll
use it. Don't knock or ring, just walk
straight in. The area's for the other servant
and the tradesmen. But the front-door bell
puts three menservants, including Balderson,
on duty in the hall, and Balderson doesn't
care to waste it."

Cheever led me into the crimson-velvet private bar of a small and rather sequestered public-house. We had not so far to go as I had expected.

As I had just got an editorship and had just met an old friend, I asked Cheever what he would take. He took a small bottle of champagne, which was not at all what I had intended, and I had another gin-and-Angostura and a large bun. I told him of my interview with Sturt.

"Yes," said Cheever, "you've got to understand Sturt. He's not a happy man and he couldn't be. He's spent every drop of his energy and every moment of his time in making a pile of money, and he's made it and it's not much use to him. He's not had any training whatever in spending money. He has read no books and there isn't a book in his house. The idea that he wants a magazine all to himself for his own reading

has occurred to him only recently. He also has the cinematograph all to himself. Hippell operates it and brings films before they have been shown to the general public -and that costs something. Same with Dullimy's Intelligent Mice. Sturt likes them and he likes the little jokes that Dullimy makes when he's showing them. So Sturt pays Dullimy a salary to give him a show twice a week on condition that he never shows the dirty rodents to anybody Well, Dullimy doesn't risk his salary. Sturt has a few men friends to dine most weeks and does them well, but he doesn't trust any woman, which makes me think he must have been married at one time. dinner they play cards, and I'm told that Sturt is a sharper, and that they are all a little bit that way. He doesn't know where he was born, nor what his parents were, nor how old he is, though he says he does. And if his name's really James Sturt, he's lucky, for he chose it himself early in life. He can't sit a horse or drive a car, but he's a good quick shot with a revolver and says it was necessary in his business at one time. keeps himself in practice still. There you are. That's the man you're to edit for, and it's the easiest money you've ever made or

"I'm not so sure of that. I know now that he doesn't wish for paper patterns of children's undergarments, nor for household hints, nor for any serial—every story must be complete in one number. It's easy so far. But he wants me to get the best men to write for him for nothing."

"So they will. But they won't know anything about it. There's no publication, so there's no infringement of copyright. Nobody can buy the magazine and only one man will ever see it. Help yourself. Take what you want. As that one man has never read anything, you can use any old stuff. If you put in a bit of Pickwick or a chapter out of the Bible, it would all be new goods for our friend James Sturt."

"Ah, that throws a good deal of light on the question."

"Good. You won't be wanted at Berkeley Square again to-day. You'd better go to Jolliffe and Tunstall, the printers, and see what I've arranged with them. You'd better buy a few books, collections of short stories, and so on, for you to steal your stuff from. You'll manage all right. Not too much of this drinking in the morning, mind. I've never found that does anybody any good."

I went to the printers and they were very decent to me. A man in an apron told me how many words went to a page and gave me a leaflet showing how to correct a proof, and put me up to a good deal of useful information. I bought six second-hand volumes of short stories by different authors, all of them first-rate men. I ordered some good new clothes, and I remember that I began luncheon with two dozen oysters. You see, I was elated, for success was a novelty to me, and besides I always did like oysters. Ah, it's not every journalist who begins with a job at £1,200 per annum. No, indeed.

I got to Berkeley Square before ten the following morning. My room was all ready for me. There was a large and varied stock of stationery in a roll-topped desk with a key to it, and some comfortable chairs and a couch that just suited my figure. I began slogging into it. I arranged the stationery as I wanted it and cut out a short story from one of the six volumes I had bought. And then a feeling of drowsiness came over me. About two hours later in came Cheever and woke me. So I got up off the couch. He had his hat and overcoat on and his eyes looked inflamed.

"Do you know," he said, "what it is to feel as if you had breakfasted on a bad egg and a gas escape and your tonsils were packed tight in red-hot lamb's wool?"

I said that I did not actually know it but I thought I had some idea what he meant.

"Well," he said, "in case it ever comes over you, I'll show you how to treat it. Follow me."

So we went back to that crimson-plush lounge. He ordered a bottle of champagne and gave me nearly a quarter of it. I also had a large bun and offered him one. He said he would just as soon finish with a double old brandy, and he did so at my expense.

I asked him if he had any assistance with the typewriting and shorthand. He said that he did not because he never used either. He checked Sturt's pass-books, of which there were several, every month. He wrote out all the cheques for Sturt's signature. He also wrote out Sturt's telegrams just after luncheon every day. Sturt dictated so slowly that Cheever could always follow. Sturt used telegrams instead of letters and thought nothing of sending a telegram of two hundred words or more. He was on the telephone but used it reluctantly and only in emergency, he had once been told that a line was engaged and this infuriated him.

He said that if every Tom, Dick, and Harry—this was a favourite phrase of his—was to be allowed to step down in front of him, it completely destroyed his interest. I should say that Cheever had not very much to do. Apparently he never even saw Sturt till after luncheon, but what there was to do Cheever did very well, and his salary was even higher than mine.

"And so it ought to be," he said. "I discovered Sturt and I've learned him all the way through from A to Z. I have a special knack with millionaires. Anything you know—and it's not much—is simply the benefit of my experience. You ought to take every opportunity of showing your

gratitude in a practical way."

I think my first number was very good,

have got hold of his idea. I kept my berth for thirteen months altogether.

(Why do you look so bored? I'm just coming to the most heart-breaking part of the story. If I hadn't got into the same carriage with you you'd have had no one to talk to for the whole journey. It's rather unreasonable. However, I'll get on quickly to the end.)

It was one morning in the eleventh month of that magazine that I found Cheever in rather a depressed mood and took him out to the customary spot to see if I could cheer him up at all.

"The fact of the case is," said Cheever, "that I'm not depressed about myself. It's about you. I've seen you heading for des-



"Mr. Sturt jerked his thumb in my direction. 'Take that up to the secretary, Balderson. Get an empty room and furnish it like an office. See?'"

and I believe that Mr. Sturt thought so too. In the course of the month he looked into my room once and said that I seemed to truction for months past, and I've no doubt I should have mentioned it if I'd thought it would have done any good. You've brought



it on yourself. Sturt has now acquired a strong taste for reading. He has ordered a thousand miscellaneous books from a large second-hand dealer. I shall be writing out the cheque to pay the dealer this afternoon. I am also directed to advertise for a librarian. They will get talking together. Sturt will show his magazine. Sturt will learn from the librarian that you've never done anything but crib bits out of books. He won't like it when he finds he's been enjoying stuff which every Tom, Dick, and Harry, as he says, has enjoyed already. I shall be sorry in some ways when you go."

"Well, well," I said brightly, "it may not be as bad as you think. Possibly if he

doesn't like my present method I may have another."

"You may. I'll have another myself. (Same as before, my dear.) But I can't hold out any hope for you."

I confess that I was sorry to hear about this purchase of books and the engagement of a librarian. I had done nothing wrong. I had given satisfaction. Sturt himself had given me complimentary messages to send to Kipling and Jacobs and so on next time I was writing. I never sent the messages because I had no way of ascertaining how they would take it. But still it showed that I had pleased him, and what more could he expect from any editor?

I got away with the next two numbers, and then the blow fell early one morning. Mr. Sturt came into my room and said:

" Get."

"I beg your pardon," I said, "is there

anything the matter?"

"Oh, no. I paid you to provide me with fresh material and you've put me off with stale stuff that's in every reading-room in the country for every Tom, Dick, and Harry to handle. You're a dirty dog. You're a thief. Hop it quickly."

He took a revolver from his hip pocket and put two shots into the roll-topped desk. I did not wait for any further acceleration. I did not even stay to say good-bye to

Cheever.

So that was the end of everything. The golden vision of my dreams had fallen about me in dust. I should never get a berth again. I should never get anything again.

I have eight hundred still left in the bank and I'm on my way to Monte Carlo. It may lead to nothing.

He had finished his story.

"It will," I said. "You can't expect a fool's luck twice in a life-time."

The train slowed down into a station. He picked up his suit-case and chuckled. I was amazed.

"Perhaps," I said, "you'll tell me what's

amusing you."

"Certainly. You are. You are, as you showed me at once, a vain, sulky, selfish, rude old man. The type is common and I always punish it. You have been spoofed. There was not a word of truth in my story, but you will believe anything to anybody's disadvantage. Milk-spoof for the aged—that's what you're the victim of. Ta-ta, old bean."

And he stepped lightly on to the platform. All I can say is that if first-class passengers are to be treated in this way, it is high time that the Directors did something about it.

CHILDREN IN THE PARK.

SWIFT as the wind—
Beautiful as dreaming—
Light, light,
As poppies in the wheat,
Darting through the sunshine,
Dipping through the shadows,
Every little runner
Has arrows on his feet.

Tiny girls in white

Are open lilies blowing—

One—two—

Count them as they pass,

Those in pink are rose-buds,

Those in blue are water-flags,

Those in green are apple leaves

Whirling on the grass.

Small sturdy boys
Are timothy and clover—
Sweet, sweet,
As meadows are at dark—
O they are so beautiful—
In the blowing weather—
Happy, star-eyed children
Playing in the park.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

THE WEDDING PRESENT 0 0

FRANK VOSPER 0

ILLUSTRATED BY CONRAD LEIGH

For a few moments a cluster of snapdragon catching some after-glow of sunset flamed against the rising tide of darkness, then merged itself into the surrounding The paths, vaguely defined, became alley-ways of water, with dark perfumed banks that were the flower-beds. Down through the orchard, where the river whispered, a faint haze was rising, not the shroudlike mists of winter that seemed to creep

N complete and beautiful surrender the

garden sank into the sea of twilight.

towards the house with a menace, but a haze wherein one might imagine the river sprites capering among the blundering moths. Ursula, standing by the great box hedge, might have been mistaken for some beautifully-wrought garden statue, so poised and still was she.

Nothing saw she of this glory of the day's departure. She was listening, listening with breath checked, with every sense but that of hearing in abeyance. She listened, too, with the hot stir of shame that is felt by any fastidious person who is inadvertently eavesdropping. For behind the box hedge, in the arbour, sat her daughter with her lover.

Ursula had not known they were there. She had drifted down the path by the hedge, had stooped a moment that a white rose, almost frightening in its pallor as it shimmered in the dusk, might brush her cheek in reassurance, when Sylvia's voice had drawn her up rigid and intent on the instant.

Sylvia spoke as one who resumes a subject after a meditative pause.

"What it comes to is this, that mother tries to ignore the past . . . and you can't do that, can you?"

Sylvia's voice was so wise, and so young. Hugh answered her thoughtfully:

"I don't feel so much that she tries to

ignore the past, but it does seem to me that she's afraid of it."

"Yes, I think you're right," agreed Sylvia. "One feels somehow with mother as though she were walking along the edge of a precipice that she daren't look down into. tries to deny the existence of the precipice, yet her fear of it is there all the time. She must have suffered terribly."

Ursula tried to move, but her feet seemed tied as in a distressing dream.

Sylvia's voice again:

"I've been talking to you about mother like this because, you see—there's something I've been wanting to ask you." "Yes, dearest?"

"Well-it's so difficult to express, but, as we propose to live with mother, I wanted to know, does this queer-what is the word? —this strange aura about mother oppress you?"

"My dear!"

His protest was tender, yet to Ursula it lacked conviction. Sylvia, too, seemed dissatisfied with it, and she persisted:

"Well, it does worry some people-not me, because I adore her, but some people find her cold and reserved. She—she chills some people."

"But, surely-"

"Oh yes, she does; you know she does. You can feel it in the house, the sort of cool restraint of everything. I'm not complaining about it, mind you; I'm used to it. like it, it's natural that I should, my tastes are similar to mother's; but what I want to know is, how does it affect you?"

Again Ursula attempted to move. It was mean and hateful to stay and listen. Yet, no, it was her right that she should hear what Hugh, her son-in-law to be, felt in regard to herself.

He was going to be so much in their lives that it was better she should know; per-



haps then she would be able to make things easier. She waited, stifled, for Hugh's answer.

He paused for a few seconds; she could hear his heel grinding the gravel; she could picture the serious consideration of his eyes, the puzzled wrinkling of the brows that was one of his most charming characteristics.

"Sylvia, my sweet, it wouldn't be fair to pretend to you that I don't notice it. I do, but it doesn't distress me. Really, I love and respect your mother, and this 'aura,' as you call it, is part of her. I accept it, just as I accept the wicked little curve

of your eyebrow."

She heard Sylvia's little sigh of relief as Hugh took her into his arms. She realised that she was forgotten by them, that all things were forgotten in their embrace. They were self-sufficient. Their kisses set her free, lonelier than before, but free.

Silently she turned and sped swiftly

towards the house.

Upstairs in her bedroom, Ursula sat in front of the dressing-table, numbed still with the conversation she had overheard. "Cool restraint. . . ." Ursula looked about her; perhaps it was true. The grey walls and pastel blue curtains; the dressing-table, severe almost in its luxury, with the brushes, hand-mirrors and trinkets of carved ivory, were, she supposed, an expression of herself. Certainly she loved ivory with its clean perfection; grey and pastel blue she loved

expressed perhaps a cool restraint. She had never thought of it like that before.

"Some people find her cold and reserved. She chills some people." Ah! how unconsciously cruel youth could be! How hard the criticism that they levelled at you with their fresh young eyes. "... as though she were walking along the edge of a precipice. . . ."

True, true indeed, she did walk along the



edge of a precipice, but ought not Sylvia to be grateful that she had been guarded from

the precipice?

Was youth ever grateful? Ursula wondered, and then reproached herself for her bitterness. There had been no note of recrimination in what Sylvia had said, nothing of ingratitude, merely a natural desire for enlightenment. Nevertheless, Ursula assured herself, it would not have made for Sylvia's happiness if she had shown her the precipice, if she had told her of the horrors of the depths below. The depths of disillusion and dishonour that her marriage with Brian Tarvener had been.

It was astonishing that, even after eighteen years, she could not think of Brian without a tremor of panic and revulsion. It was neurotic, positively neurotic, she was continually telling herself, but still the helpless fear persisted.

It was eighteen years since he had left her, and for ten of those years he had been dead. Yet the evil memory of him remained alive and vivid, much more alive and vivid than if his memory had been sainted. . . .

The actual news of his death had been so difficult to believe; the manner of its telling unbalanced and incongruous. The lank stranger who had stood in her drawing-room ten years ago, one Sunday afternoon in spring-time, trying to tell her the ugly story of Brian's death, had himself seemed a person from another world, as unreal as the story he told.

The vague searching eyes of a man used to lonely places, the dried sallowness of his sunken cheeks, the shaky hands with their broken finger-nails, and his thirsty way of continually moistening his lips, all suggested

the East.

Not the East of the Army and the Civil Service, of clubs and hill-stations, but an unfamiliar East, murky and discreditable. It was strange how she had known the moment she saw this man that he had come from her husband.

"You are Mrs. Brian Tarvener?"

An educated voice that had become careless. Ursula nodded. Fear was at her heart again, stealing her speech. In a choking mist she listened, premeditating somehow everything he said.

"I was your husband's best friend . . . latterly, that is, after the big smash. . . .

I was with him at the end.'

Ursula stared at him, but could find nothing to say.

"He asked me to come to you—circumstances did not permit of his death being notified officially—do you wish me to explain?"

Still words would not come to Ursula. Before she could stop him, he had begun:

"We were working together on a scheme, a business scheme, rather rash—lot of dirty Bengalis in with us-became necessary to lie low for a bit—required pretty clear head -husband's head-forgive me-not too clear—silly of me, should have foreseen. The Indian police were pretty hot on us. Had to leave your husband disguised in the bazaar at Pindi—play waiting game. M'self hurried to Calcutta, broke to the wide and raining like the devil, excuse me. Three months no news from Pindi—got anxious, decided to risk it and get to him somehow -couldn't get past Lahore-circumstances again—suspicious authorities—took three months to convince them. Got to Pindi eventually in a rolled-up carpet—awful smell of camel—I beg your pardon. I found your husband—they'd been killing him for six months—not the police but our disappointed business friends. They'd bribed the Kashmiri scoundrel who kept the house-slow poison, rather nasty-"

Ursula turned from him to the window, and gazed upon the sunlit garden that had grown suddenly hard and metallic.

"I believe there was a locket, at least he kept on talking about a locket——"

That locket! It brought the story to life for her with a stab of painful memory. "I hunted for it afterwards among his things and couldn't find it anywhere—rather afraid the Kashmiri must have——"

She turned and stopped him; the locket and all it meant stirred her to action.

"It was very good of you to come. I thank you." She paused, wondering how best to conclude the interview. Something in his

fidgeting eyes prompted her.

"You've had a long walk; can I offer you a drink before you go?" It was scarcely necessary to wait for an answer. His expression, as he took the whisky and soda from the maid, had remained with Ursula as symbolical of what the East can rouse in men. A thirst of body and soul, restless and insatiable, a thing of damnation.

He had strengthened her, this stranger; strengthened her immeasurably in her resolve to keep Sylvia in complete ignorance of her father's discreditable life and sordid death. Assuredly it was the only thing to do, to

keep for ever from her daughter that breath of vileness that clung inevitably to all that Brian had done.

And now, after all these years, her conduct was being questioned, was being made the subject almost of reproach. She must say something to Sylvia, justify herself in some degree. After what she had overheard it was only right to herself and to her daughter. Yet, inexpressibly she shrank from it. It was unthinkable to disillusion Sylvia, to blur her clear eyes with the shame and sorrow of the dead years.

Ah! But they were not dead. There was no past, all life was a series of consequences. "The evil that men do——"

The dressing-gong, breaking in on her thoughts, had in it an echo of the East, disquieting and ominous.

II.

HUGH had gone. It was more than an hour since he had said good night, and, after shattering the peace outside with the roar of his motor-bicycle, had droned his way towards Little Friars, ten miles across the Downs.

The calm and scented warmth of the night were restored. It was almost too warm. To Ursula it was breathless. She drew her chair nearer to the wide-open French win-Sylvia rose and crossed to the piano. Very tenderly she began to play. She played Ursula's best-beloved Chaminade. Ursula leant back in her chair and closed her eyes. The Chaminade was significant. Sylvia must be feeling her uneasiness, and was trying to make it less difficult for her. The music. like a cool spray, fell upon the heavy air, striving to disperse the oppression. long time the limpid music bathed them; at last it wavered, trembled for a moment, and ceased.

Sylvia remained at the piano, her hands folded in her lap. Ursula still rested in the chair, her back to Sylvia. She felt calmer now. The music had had its effect. Without opening her eyes, she spoke:

"My dearest, I overheard you and Hugh

talking in the arbour this evening."

She heard Sylvia's half-whispered—"Oh!"

"I shouldn't have listened, dear, and yet something made me. I felt that it was important, necessary, that I should know how you and Hugh felt about your future with me."

Sylvia got up from the piano. She came and sat on the arm of Ursula's chair, nestling against her. "We didn't—we didn't hurt you too terribly, darling, did we?" she asked anxiously.

"Never mind, dear," Ursula replied. "It's so much better that it should happen now than later when you are married."

Sylvia's fingers stroked her temples,

soothed her, gave fresh courage.

"One thing it has done," she continued, "it's made me wonder, once again, whether I've done right in keeping so silent to you about—about the earlier days. What I've done up to now I've done for the best, or what I thought was the best."

"Of course, Mother, I'm sure of that."

"I want you to listen carefully, Sylvia. I want you to try and understand—"

She paused, and Sylvia, still stroking her temples, waited patiently.

Very quietly Ursula began:

"I was brought up, dear, in an unusually sheltered atmosphere, far too sheltered, I see now. My mother died shortly after I was born, and my father, sweet soul, was quite out of touch with the world. You can just remember your grandfather, can't you?"

Svlvia nodded.

"He was completely absorbed in his garden, and he worshipped me as the most delicate flower in his possession. I really believe that at times, in his absent-minded fashion, he did actually regard me as a particularly valuable bloom.

"I remember once, when I had been ill and the doctor had ordered me away, how he suggested a change of air. 'Going to transplant you, my lily, for a little while; try you in a slightly sandier soil, at Bourne-

mouth.'

"So it was he brought me up, protecting me from every outside influence with the high walls of his garden. When I met your father and fell passionately in love with him, as I did from the first moment, I was hopelessly incapable of controlling and understanding him. My love for him was a fairy-tale. I was the princess and he the prince. Oh yes, and he suited the part, too, when I first saw him. I remember how he was talking to my father under the great cedar tree on the lawn the first time he called; how he turned suddenly and saw me, and the smile on his radiantly handsome I couldn't see that his face was too handsome, too sensuous, too full, with a fullness that was due to excesses that even then were becoming serious. I could recognise no signs, I could only adore, and everything favoured us. My father, mingling his horticulture with the Old Testament, described Brian as a green bay tree, and, since he was the son of a very dear old school-friend, he found him perfectly suitable as a future son-in-law when the matter was put before him. Within three months of our first meeting we were married."

Ursula, up till now, had maintained a certain lightness of tone, but at this point of her story she shied. Shied not so much because of the hurt to her own or to Sylvia's feelings, but from the instinctive reticence between parent and child.

She recognised, however, that now she had begun there could be no going back.

"My dear-I hardly know how to tell you of the wretchedness of my married life from the outset. Your father, you see, was utterly selfish, and his brutality was a direct result of that selfishness. He was quite incapable of understanding anyone else's feelings. To him my innocence was merely an annoying ignorance specially designed to thwart him. For a long time I made no complaint, to him or to anyone else, but when at last I did, one of the most amazing things was the way in which his own father defended him. It was on the question of his drinking. During the honeymoon I noticed that he took what seemed to me a great deal of drink, but at the same time it didn't appear to have much effect on him. It was not until we had been back from the honeymoon for a week or so that he broke out seriously, and then, for five weeks on end, he never returned home sober. Sometimes he would be gone for two or three days at a stretch, and then I would wake up in the early morning to find him swaying over me, sodden and dull, or sometimes crying and maudlin. I appealed to him, I made him promise to reform. broke his promises, and at last I locked my door on him. He broke the door in, wrecked the room, and nearly killed me. It was then that I spoke to his father. His father refused, or pretended to refuse, to take the matter seriously. . . . 'He's been about with some of the bright sparks in his regiment, that's all it is, m'dear. You can't expect him to give up all his old friends at once, y'know. He's a bit wild, I admit, but then so was I at his age. It's just a passing phase, m'dear, that's all.' know, Sylvia, it's an extraordinary thing how some people can dismiss a serious matter by applying a certain hackneyed expression to it. 'A passing phase,' for instance.

"Brian's your father's phase never

passed, it grew steadily worse. Other things he did that I can't tell you about——"

"I never spoke to anyone about my trouble," Ursula continued. "Brian's father had put me off that once and for all. I had realised by then, moreover, that the relationships between man and wife are entirely personal. It is for themselves, and themselves alone, to find their own level, whether it be happy or miserable. And so, secretly and unaided, I struggled to bring your father back to his senses.

"Again and again I forgave him. . . . I used to believe him each time he gave me his solemn oath that he was going to pull himself together. I used to believe him. He was that sort of person—convincing and plausible. It was the apparent genuineness of his repentances that made his lapses so heartrending. For nearly two years this terrible business went on. Then, in the middle of one of his worst bouts, I found that you, my dearest, were coming to me. And in you I placed all my hopes; you were to be the bond between your father and myself, that should restore our happi-When he came back to me, worn out and begging for forgiveness, I told him the news. He seemed to me to be overjoyed, and made a dozen vows and resolutions for the future. His manner towards me changed. he became as he had been when he first met me. He ceased to look dissipated. youthfulness and good looks returned. felt sure that at last I had succeeded. Happy, practically for the first time since our marriage, I waited for your arrival.

"A fortnight before you were born, your father told me that he had to go to London on business for a few days. Before he left he came to me. 'Oh, my darling,' he said, 'I'm so anxious about you, and yet I'm so tremendously happy, I shall be the proudest man on earth . . .' And as he kissed me good-bye I remember I nearly wept with triumph. That night, your father having obtained five thousand pounds of my father's money by means of a forged cheque, left England in the company of some dissolute friends who were engaged in certain questionable money-making schemes in the East."

Ursula felt Sylvia stiffen at her side, but she made no comment.

"There's very little else to tell you, dearest. Things were hushed up as far as was possible, and I never again saw or heard of your father until ten years ago, when a friend of his, back from India, called on me and told me Brian was dead. Whether the

man's story was true or not I don't know; it sounded true enough, but it was all very obscure. The story was quite impossible to verify. Do you want me to tell you about it?"

"No, I'd rather not hear," Sylvia murmured.

"The shock of your father's desertion, the deceit of it, after all my efforts, hardened something in my heart, and that is why there is about me this 'aura' that you were discussing with Hugh this evening."

"Darling, we never knew that things had

been as bad as that."

"Of course you didn't, my lamb; I'm not blaming you. I only thought you ought to know. You understand now?"

"Yes, I understand. Poor Mummie."
Sylvia slipped to the floor crouched at

Sylvia slipped to the floor, crouched at Ursula's feet, her arms around her knees.

"Some people might think I was overestimating the effect of those two years," Ursula suggested. "But two years is a long time to anyone as young and impressionable as I was."

The two lapsed into silence. Everywhere there was a great stillness. Even outside the minute noises of the night seemed hushed, and all the garden was muffled in the silver draperies of moonlight. A pang of yearning towards her daughter, that was physical as well as mental, swept over Ursula, yet she remained motionless, restraining herself from gathering her child into her arms with a tender comforting. She must leave Sylvia aloof and unbiassed to form her own conclusions.

At last Sylvia rose and stood looking down on her mother. "I'm glad you've told me, Mother," she said, "but I'm afraid it's been painful for you."

"That doesn't matter so long as you're

satisfied."

"Satisfied?"

Sylvia appeared to consider the word. "Oh yes, for myself and Hugh I'm satisfied." Then, with a slight hesitancy, "But as for you, yourself——"

"For me?" murmured Ursula, astonished.
"Yes, you, dearest. There's something that I want for you—something more——"
Sylvia lent forward, searching her mother's face as if to find that something. "I wish, I do so wish——" she began eagerly, and then broke off, unable to give expression to her thought.

"What do you wish, my love?" asked Ursula, all her being strained to grasp this intangible desire of Sylvia's. But somehow the intensity of the moment slipped

past

"Oh, I don't know," Sylvia murmured.
"I don't know." She drew herself up with a sudden shyness. "I think, if you don't mind, I'll go to bed. Good night, Mummie dear."

"Good night, my precious." Sylvia crossed to the door.

"Turn out the lights, please, dear, my eyes are tired," said Ursula. She heard the click of the switch, heard Sylvia pause with her hand on the handle of the door, then she heard her daughter's low cry of love and pity as she ran to her in the darkness.

For one moment she felt Sylvia's lips pressed fervently against her own. Sylvia's arms about her neck and shoulders. The

next instant she had gone.

III.

URSULA was alone again, alone in the moonlight. Body and mind were possessed with a strange inertia, a reaction from the emotional strain of the last few hours. The moonlight streamed into the room, across her chair, absorbing with its white fire what little of her energy remained. The shadow of a larch tree on the lawn stretched towards her like a dark hand. She tried to think; to consider once again whether she had done right. Had she told Sylvia too much or too little?

Ah! she wished things could be easier; wished she could change her own nature; wished impossible things.

From the terrace a breath of jasmine stole over her in an agony of fragrance. She ceased to think. Her eyelids fluttered and dropped.

A light cloud crept across the face of the moon; from the orchard came the grating

thrill of a nightjar.

Footsteps on the terrace outside roused her, casually at first, then with a terrible bounding of her heart. She knew those footsteps, beyond all shadow of doubt she knew them!

A sickening fear passed its damp fingers over her. The footsteps were drawing nearer. She shut her eyes, terrified. She knew whom she would see when she opened her eyes. The tingling darkness of her tightly-closed eyes became as fearful as sight itself: clenching the arms of the chair, she looked up. Framed in the window, but far enough back on the terrace for the moonlight clearly to illuminate him, stood Brian.

At the sight of him, so palpably there, Ursula's fear left her. It was as though anticipation had been frightening, whereas his actual presence braced her to unwonted courage. He stood there smiling, with lips twisted. The sort of smile that closes sharply on a sob.

For some moments they faced. It was Ursula, still suffused with this peculiar cour-

age, who broke the silence.

"So you've come back," she said softly. And, speaking through that twisted smile of his, he answered:

"I imagined you'd be more surprised to

see me."

"No, somehow I have never believed you to be dead. All these years I've known subconsciously that you would come back again."

"Like a bad halfpenny—what?"

He laughed, a laugh that was sharp and rather terrible. Terrible, too, was the change in his appearance. It was not so much that he had aged, but that some essential spirit of youth still stirred beneath the outward crust of suffering and debauch. His hair was grey and his face ghastly, yet there was something in the line of his shoulders and his waist that still suggested the young man she had loved years ago.

He was dressed in thin tropical clothing that had become filthy and shapeless. A torn breast pocket hung limply, and a rent in one of the knees of his trousers gaped like a

wound.

It was then that she saw his feet. He was wearing crudely-made slippers that were smothered in dust and falling to pieces. Through one of them his toes protruded, and she saw that they were stained with blood.

She rose and moved towards him; sudden pity at the sight of that torn foot caught at her throat. She could not trust herself to speak. She made a gesture to draw him into the room. With fevered eyes he gazed at her hungrily.

" May I ? "

It was unlike him to implore in that fashion; unlike him, too, was the hopeless, beseeching voice.

He slunk into the room and sank into Ursula's chair, while she mechanically fetched brandy and soda from the diningroom. His hand shook as he took the glass from her and drained it at a gulp.

"By Jove, that's good. Can I have another?" Then, as she poured him out a second drink, "You see, I haven't altered

much," and laughed again with a note of bravado.

It was queer, this flash of bitter defiance. It emphasised so pathetically his general attitude of cowed helplessness. From somewhere he produced a half-smoked cheroot, and, lighting it, leant back in the chair with a sigh of relief.

"You're pretty comfortable here—what?"

"Yes, I was able to buy this place with the money Uncle Trevor left me."

"Ha! Uncle Trevor, when did he-?"

"Six or seven years ago."

"Dirty old skinflint. I'll bet he hated having to leave his money to anybody. No, no, I didn't mean that."

The penitent mood again.

"But he did not do much to help me, at any time, did he——?"

"No, I suppose not."

Ursula marvelled at her composure. It was astonishing to be able to sit here with the man who had made her suffer so poignantly, just as if he had never been away. Suddenly Brian caught sight of a recent photograph of Sylvia.

"Who's that?"

"That's a photograph of Sylvia, my—our daughter."

"By Jove!"

He scrambled to his feet, and, snatching the picture from the little side table, held it in the moonlight. "So it is! So it is! And she's beautiful. Very like you, too. How old is she?"

" Eighteen."

"Heavens! And to think I've never seen her."

Would he want to see her now? He couldn't see her; she must show him that it was impossible.

"She is going to be married at the end of

next week," she explained.

Brian caught the anxiety in her voice.

"Oh, I see. And I suppose you feel that the appearance of a scandalous papa might spoil the pretty scene?"

His eyes, which had been wistful, narrowed in a sneer. "The guest without a wedding garment—what? All the same, if I were not utterly broke, I should like to give her a wedding present."

An idea seemed to strike him.

"But of course I can give her something." He rummaged in his pockets and found a small penknife; with this he ripped some stitches in the lining of his jacket. Something small and hard fell to the floor. He picked it up and held it in his open palm.

Ursula flinched at the sight. That little plain gold locket was the symbol of the happiness she had lost, of her young faith that had been destroyed.

"Do you remember this, Ursula?"

"Yes," she breathed, "I remember it."
Then, as his fingers fumbled with the fastening, "No, please." Her protest was sharp and pained. "Please don't open it."

He seemed not to hear her, for the locket flew open, revealing the faded photograph inside. It was a cheap and common little photograph of Brian and Ursula, taken in the style of twenty years ago, with their heads together, and pathetic sentimental expressions on their faces.

As he gazed at it quizzically, Brian laughed, a rather more pleasant laugh. "Do you remember our having this taken on the first week of our honeymoon? That wretched little photographer by the pier? We'd gone over for the day. First of all we had the most awful bilious lunch, all the schoolgirlish things you liked—don't you remember?"

Involuntarily, Ursula laughed with him.

"And after that we decided we'd be the complete 'Arry and 'Arriet and have our 'likeness took.' We had to have a dreadful 'rest'-thing at the back of our necks—do ycuremember? Well, there it is—a present for Sylvia, did you say? The locket's quite a good one, if the photograph's a little mouldy. Another good thing about it is, it's not much like me as I am now—what?"

Ursula raised her eyes from the photograph and considered Brian again. No, it was not much like him now. The pity and the waste of his life tore at her heart. Why should people make themselves and other people suffer so? Without knowing it, she began to voice her question. "Oh, Brian, why? Why?"

But he realised her meaning before she

got further.

"Ah! that's the question—why? I'm afraid there's no reason, old girl. You might even say that it is nobody's fault in particular, not even mine. It's just a sort of evil force pounding away, like an engine, inside a man, driving him to ruin in spite of himself. A mad restlessness, flaying your soul like a whip, so that you rush blindly to destruction. It's not so bad for people who don't realise the wretchedness they are causing. I used to be like that, but now I can appreciate everything—that's the change there is in me. I don't mean that I've reformed in any way, I don't think I have. It's just that I've gained an understanding,

a realisation." His voice trembled with desperate earnestness. "Ursula—Hell is when you realise completely your own rottenness."

"I should have thought," said Ursula gently, "that it was the beginning of Heaven."

"Not if you can't get back," he whispered. "Not if you can't get back."

He turned from her and put the locket on a table by the window, where stood a great bowl of dark roses.

She could see how the hair at the back of his head had retained some glint of colour, and how, in its unkempt condition, it curled like a boy's. There was an appeal about it that alarmed her. Alarming, too, was the silence that fell between them. Brian stood there by the table, presumably deep in thought. She was sure he was gathering his strength for the climax of their conversation, the revelation of his object in returning.

She knew what that object was. She thrust it from her, closed her eyes to it, but she knew. Without turning, he spoke.

"Ursula—you're going to take me back again?"

Yes, that was it! She had known all the time. She must meet this firmly.

"Brian, you know that's impossible."
He swung round with tortured eyes. "I'm alone, utterly alone and lost!"

His voice was thin, almost a wail. She shut her ears to it.

"No-no, not again-you can't ask me."

"I do ask you. I can ask anything. I have no shame, I have nothing in the world, and I can't go on like this without anything or anybody."

He stood before her, twisting his hands, and as he spoke his voice quivered and he began to cry, with awful dry sobs that seemed to find no relief. He made no attempt to conceal the fact or to hide his face in his hands. His suffering was naked and exposed, like the sores of an Eastern beggar.

Yet through it all Ursula saw the wreckage he would bring to Sylvia's life if she gave in. He had just admitted that he had not reformed; he was beyond it; he could never get back. Sylvia, too, would have to wear herself out in the struggle. No, she couldn't allow it; she couldn't. He must have seen the resolution in her eyes, for he turned away, struggling for control.

In a few moments he was calm again. "All right," he said, and his voice had the desolation of a barren landscape seen in a half-light. "All right, if that's how you

feel I'll go. . . ." And, without looking at her, he began to shamble towards the French windows.

At that hopeless acceptance of his dismissal, at the sight of his bowed head and drooping shoulders, something in her thawed, and a great compassion flooded and warmed her heart. She knew she could never turn him out. Swiftly she moved towards him:

"Brian!"

He turned. Again his eyes met hers and

think, to see quite clearly what she was doing. It was not going to be easy. It would be much the same struggle as before. Yet she could not let him go. She was in the thrall of something stronger than herself, something that had to be obeyed, even as Brian had to obey the evil force that dominated him.

She could feel him shaken with a passion of gratitude. His arms clasped her as a drowning man clasps his rescuer.



"Ursula flinched at the sight. That little plain gold locket was the symbol of the happiness she had lost."

understood, without a word passing between them. He gave a great sigh. "Oh, thank God!" he said, and sank to his knees. "Don't let me go again, Ursula," he prayed.

For answer she took his head in her hands. Underneath her exaltation she was able to "The terrible loneliness. You don't know, Ursula," he murmured.

And, stroking his head, she soothed him.

"You needn't be lonely any more, Brian."



Plans formed in her head. "We shall have to go away, dear," she explained. "You'll need a milder climate to get well again. And in any case, you do understand, don't you, that you can't stay here? Tell me you understand."

Most unexpectedly he laughed, joyously, light-heartedly. He looked up at her, and laughter was in his eyes as well as on his lips.

"It's you, Ursula, dearest, who don't

understand. I didn't want you to take me back into your house. I only wanted you to take me back into your heart."

Again his youthful laughter filled the room, merging with the moonlight till both moonlight and laughter seemed to shimmer blindingly.

Dazzled, Ursula closed her eyes. Far away she caught the happiness of his voice as if in an echo. "I only wanted you to take me back into your heart."

IV.

ONLY for a moment she closed her eyes. When she opened them she thought at first that she was in a strange room. The moonlight had gone, and both room and garden were grey and vague with dawn.

She was standing alone by the table near the window, and her hands caressed, not Brian's head, but the dark roses in their silver bowl. A dream? A vision?

ghost?

Perhaps—but something remained. sula could feel the exaltation still. knew that a weight had been lifted from her

spirit, that it would never return.

From the garden came the note of a robin, and Ursula's heart sang with it. A movement behind caused her to glance round. Sylvia stood in the doorway. They stared at each other in astonishment.

"Mother darling!"

"I was desperately tired last night. I slept all night in that chair," said Ursula.

"Dearest, what an extraordinary thing!"

"And you?" inquired Ursula. are you doing about at this hour?"

"I woke a little while ago and couldn't sleep again. I was just going to slip out and watch the dawn on the river. But you in that chair all night. And you don't look a bit tired. You look wonderful."

She drew nearer, looking at her mother curiously. "Darling, you look glorious. What has happened?"

Ursula could find no reply. She could not

express this new and wonderful joy.

"I feel so happy, Sylvia," she said. "Oh,

"I know what it is," Sylvia cried with sudden enlightenment. "It's that 'something' that I wished for you last night. You've found it. I know you have. It's in your face, it's all about you like a halo."
"Not like an 'aura'?" asked Ursula,

smiling back at her.

"No, no; the 'aura' has gone, the 'something' has taken it away. You've never looked like this before. What is it, Mother, this glorious 'something'?"

In that instant Ursula saw what the

"something" was.

"Forgiveness," she said simply. "Forgiveness, my lamb—a very precious thing."

She turned to where the bowl of roses stood. Some of their petals had fallen on to the polished surface of the table. The dark petals looked like a little pool of spilt wine. She stirred them with her fingers. There, beneath them, was the little plain gold locket.

She felt no surprise at sight of it. She had

known it would be there.

She was quite certain now that Brian had been dead for more than ten years, and she was well aware that the Brian she had just spoken with had been no more than a vision and a wraith, yet here was the locket, an unaccountable but divinely beautiful materialisation of memory and forgiveness.

She picked it up from amongst the petals. "A wedding present for you, Sylvia," she said. "A present from us both-your father and me." And, with shining eyes, she fastened the locket round her daughter's neck.

HEATHER.

THERE'S lots of folks who go abroad when holidays come round, With ne'er a thought of what in England's counties may be found. For me there's just one single road, and that—whate'er the weather— Leads up along thro' Devon lanes to Dartmoor and the heather.

I think when God made England it occurr'd to Him that Devon Would be just the place to come to for a holiday from heaven If He should chance to need one, so He planted, quite apart, A purple-heather'd garden in His favourite county's heart.

If some poor sightless fellow said to me-"Just for a day I'm going to get my eyesight back: show me where best I may Enjoy this wond'rous miracle," we'd hurry off together And spend those precious hours on Dartmoor, gazing o'er God's heather. ROBERT FALKNER.

TELEVISION

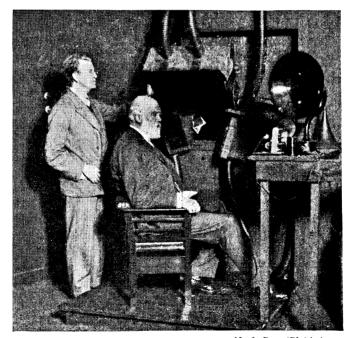
SEEING AS WELL AS HEARING BY ELECTRICITY

• By R. F. TILTMAN •

F.R.S.A., A.M.I.R.E., A.Rad.A., Fellow of the Television Society

ITHIN the memory of many now living enormous strides have been made in scientific fields. The aeroplane, wireless, the telephone, the gramophone, the motor-car, and a host of

by Mr. John L. Baird, a young Scottish engineer, in an attic laboratory in Soho, London. The forty members of the Royal Institution who accepted the invitation to attend this demonstration had to enter in



[Leeds Press (Photo) Agency.

SIR OLIVER LODGE SEATED BEFORE THE APPARATUS FOR ACHIEVING "NOCTOVISION" (SEEING IN TOTAL DARKNESS).

other marvels have developed in comparatively few years. Now a further scientific achievement, eclipsing many of the wonders of the past, is being brought into our homes.

It is less than three years since the first demonstration of true television was given batches of six, owing to the confined space, and they saw crude, flickering images of living human faces wirelessed from one room to the next.

Already this British Television system has developed sufficiently to be adopted for a

public broadcast service in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, where home receiving sets are on sale and wireless sight is brought to the fireside. Very shortly a public service will be in operation also in Great Britain and the first receiving sets will be on the market.

When the telephone was invented by Graham Bell, another Scotsman, more than fifty years ago, and it was found possible to speak over great distances, wags of the day said, "We shall be seeing at a distance next." The march of science has turned

for it enables us to witness the likeness of moving objects and people, with all gradations of light, shade, and detail, so that on the receiving screen they appear just as they do to an observer on the spot. Natural colouring is not seen, the images being perceived in gradations of black and white, as on a cinema film.

Television should not be confused with photo-telegraphy. The latter is merely the sending of still *photographs* by wire or wireless; reproductions of these telegraphed pictures are frequently seen in our daily papers.

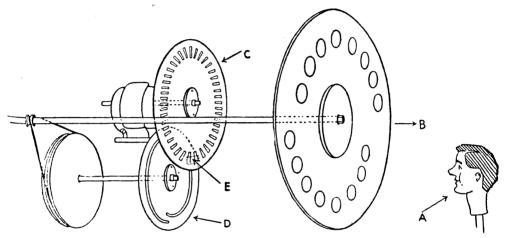


DIAGRAM OF THE FIRST TELEVISION TRANSMITTER, EXHIBITED AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

A. The object to be transmitted. (This is the original ventriloquist's head used in the first experiments.)

B. Revolving dial with lenses, causing a succession of images of the object A to pass over the disc C.

C. A slotted disc revolving at high speed interrupts the light reflected from the image, causing it to reach the light-sensitive cell in a series of flashes.

D. Before reaching the cell, the light passes through a rotating spiral slot, giving a further subdivision of the image.

The aperture through which the light passes to the light-sensitive cell. The action of the discs B, C and D is to cause the light image to fall on the cell in a series of flashes, each flash corresponding to a small square of the image.

These flashes falling on the cell generate electrical impulses which are transmitted to the receiving machine, where they control the light from a lamp placed behind an optical device which is similar to, and revolves exactly

in step with, the transmitting machine.

By this means a spot of light of varying intensity is caused to traverse a ground-glass screen. The light is bright at the high lights and dim at the shadows. This light spot traverses the screen so rapidly that owing to the persistence of vision the whole image appears instantaneously to the eye.

these jesting words to scientific fact. We can see by wireless.

So rapidly has this branch of science developed that there are still many who do not realise its significance, and it may therefore be well to say quite clearly what television is and what it does.

Television is popularly referred to as "Seeing by Wireless," but this is not strictly correct, for it is seeing by telegraphy, either wire or wireless. Television is instantaneous electrical vision over any distance, and it may be regarded as reproduction of sight,

Television may be said to deal with vision of living, moving things, photo-telegraphy with still or dead things.

This new marvel of science does not, of course, enable us to violate privacy in any way, for we get only vision of that which is within focus of the electric "eye" of the transmitter, just as our broadcast programmes enable us to hear only that which is spoken immediately before the microphone.

For thousands of years mankind could see only that which was within range of the naked eye. Then the telescope enormously increased the range of possible vision, but still within very definite limits. Now television gives us the power of sight over distances as great as those over which we are accustomed to communicate telephonically, and this irrespective of any barriers that may intervene.

Broadcasting, as we have grown accustomed to it in the last few years, appeals to one sense only, for although we hear faithful reproduction of the spoken word and the tones of the musicians' instruments we cannot see anything. So with the cinema at present—excluding the "talking" films now being shown—we may watch the actors' range of actions and expression but we cannot hear a word.

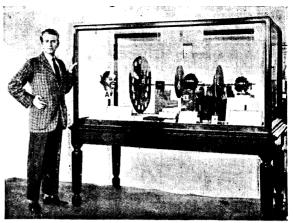
Television, however, allied with radio telephony, will enable us both to see and to hear whatever takes place in the studio before the microphone. Thus we are on the threshold of a new era, even more fascinating in its possibilities than that which opened with the introduction of broadcast telephony.

We are indeed fast approaching the day when from our arm-chairs we shall not only hear the play but see the players and the



[Topical Press.

DEMONSTRATING THE ORIGINAL RECEIVING "TELEVISOR," ON THE GROUND-GLASS SCREEN OF WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE IMAGE OF A PERSON HOLDING TWO DOLLS.



| Central News

MR. J. L. BAIRD WITH THE ORIGINAL TRANSMITTING MACHINE WITH WHICH THE FIRST DEMONSTRATION OF TELEVISION WAS GIVEN.

scenery. Speaking nearly two years ago, Senatore Marconi said: "I am sure that before long television will be brought to practical success, and this will enable us to transmit the vision of actual events over the greatest distances."

The transmission of speech by wireless over great distances is now a commonplace, but while we are accustomed to hearing at a distance, and think nothing of "tuning-in" a speaker who may be five hundred miles away, the idea of actually seeing that speaker

is still strange, though, logically, one is no more strange than the other.

Most people understand, at least roughly, the process of telephony. The sound is turned into electricity, sent out by wire or wireless as electrical vibrations, and at the receiver turned back into sound.

In television the process is much the same. Standing before the television transmitter, the light reflected from the face affects a light-sensitive cell, causing it to send out a fluctuating electrical current. This current is amplified, sent by wire or wireless to the receiver, where it is turned back into light and creates an image of the trans-

mitted object on the screen. So, both in telephony and television, all that is sent by wire or through the ether is a fluctuating current of electricity.

Let us examine the process a little more closely.

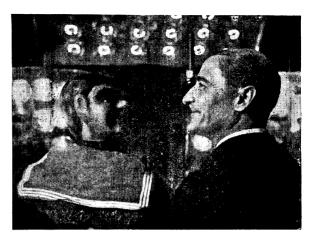
If you are before the "eye" of the transmitter, the light reflected from your features is broken into fragments, which are focused on to a light-sensitive cell in an immensely rapid succession of tiny pieces, some bright, others dim, according to whether they are reflected from high lights or from shadows. This light-sensitive cell regulates an electrical current, making it weak when receiving dim light and strong when receiving bright light. The varying

current is sent by wire or wireless to the receiver, where it controls a source of light, the varying light being projected on to a screen in such a way as to reproduce the

living image of your features.

It will be realised that it was no simple task to solve the five main problems of television, which were to break up the image into fragments, to convert those fragments into a varying electric current, to transmit this current, to reconvert the current when received into light, and to project the varying light so as to build up the image on the screen.

The great essential in television is immense speed, for it is necessary to send a succes-



MR. ARTHUR PRINCE, THE WELL-KNOWN VENTRILOQUIST, WITH HIS DUMMY BEFORE THE TRANSMITTING TELEVISOR IN EARLY EXPERIMENTAL TRANSMISSIONS.

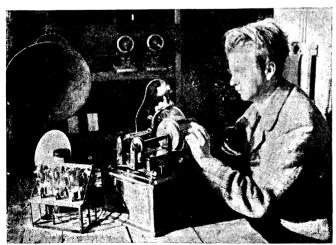
sion of images so rapidly that they appear on the receiving screen with movements as smooth and natural as those of a cinema film. The illusion of natural movement is only possible in both television and the cinema film owing to the persistence of vision, or the "time lag" of the eye. A familiar example of this persistence of "vision" is to whirl rapidly a glowing cigarette, when it looks like a solid ring of light instead of a moving spot. If ten or more television images are reconstructed on the screen per second, the reception will appear to the eye continuous and instantaneous.

Without undue optimism, it seems almost certain that within the next few years the

> television screen will be as familiar a sight in the home as the loud speaker.

Much thought has been devoted to the simplification of the Baird receiving "Televisors" necessary controls will be kept as simple as possible. It is anticipated that the first sets will be sold at between £25 and £30, no more than we had to pay for a valve set in the early days of broadcast-

Probably two types of apparatus will be available. One set will combine a valve set and a television screen; another will contain a television



THE INVENTOR HAS SUCCEEDED IN RECORDING ON A PHONO-GRAPH THE "SOUNDS" MADE BY FACES.

receiver only and will be designed for attaching to an existing radio set. For reception of the television signals a powerful wireless set will be necessary (about four valves), and it is intended to transmit combined programmes of both sounds and sights, so that the receiver will get the one from his loud speaker and the other from the screen.

The first programme will probably be transmitted from two stations. The television signals will come from the Baird transmitter in Long Acre, London, which has a power of 4 kw. and will work on 200 metres. The telephony signals to accompany the sights may be sent from another radio station now being constructed near London. No doubt, later, other transmitting stations will be brought into operation to serve the whole country.

Looking into the receiving screen of a "Televisor" may be likened to watching the focusing screen of a camera, except that the television image is not inverted, as is the image in a camera.

When "looking-in" you will no doubt be subjected to certain interferences, just as with telephony programmes, but the results will be different.

If a neighbour mishandles his radio set and sends out a series of shrieks, howls and whistles (as neighbours are apt to do at times), these will appear on the screen as a

whirling mass of "snowflakes "; at the same time, of course, you will hear the disturbance from your loud speaker. Interference from near-by electric mains or cables will appear on the screen as a series of regular vertical bands across the image, while atmospherics pass over the screen as a quick white flash as you hear the sharp tearing sound from the loud speaker.

It may be that at times the images will suffer from electrical distortion if not properly adjusted, the face for a moment appearing flattened or twisted. This distortion, however, will be more easily corrected than distortion in a loud speaker,

for the eye is a far more reliable measuring instrument than the ear.

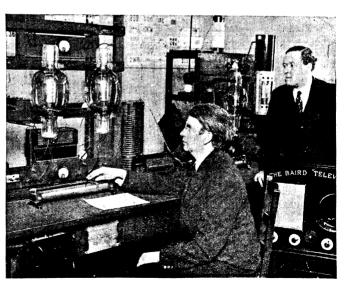
In early days, also, it is probable that you may notice a flickering effect on the screen, such as was a feature of the early cinematograph films.

Although television has now developed from the laboratory stage into a commercial proposition, it must be borne in mind that the science is still in its early days and nothing like perfection can yet be expected.

It is only necessary to recall the early days of other inventions to view the matter in its proper light. We remember that the early aeroplane flew *sometimes*, the phonograph made a lot of noise, the cinema gave us poor, badly-lighted, flickering scenes, and the railway train and motor-car were both at first slow, noisy, and uncomfortable.

It is interesting to quote the opinion of two eminent men. Professor Taylor Jones, of Glasgow University, said: "My impression after witnessing the demonstrations is that the chief difficulties connected with television have been overcome by Mr. Baird, and that the improvements still to be effected are mainly matters of detail."

Professor F. J. Cheshire, C.B.E., late of the Imperial College of Science, London, wrote in a technical paper: "... the features of the secretary were clearly recognisable, and the general illumination of the picture surprisingly strong... Many years



[Photopress.

THE 5 KW. WIRELESS TRANSMITTER WITH WHICH TELEVISION HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED TO THE "BERENGARIA" IN MIDATLANTIC AND TO NEW YORK,

ago I saw an early experiment in the projection of moving pictures. In this case, too, the pictures were not steady and the frequency with which they were thrown on the screen was obviously not sufficient; but these defects were quickly overcome and the kinematograph became a great commercial success. I think it is highly probable that television projecting apparatus will develop on similar lines. In principle the present apparatus appears to be sound."

The earliest programmes sent out when sets are available this winter will be of a restricted nature. There is no difficulty in showing by television a good view of one or two people, so that the items which may be expected in early days are vocal and instrumental soloists, entertainers, lecturers,



TELEVISION ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

Recognisable images of living people being transmitted by wireless and received in New York.

comedians and ventriloquists. It is interesting to note that one of the first "professionals" to help Mr. Baird in his early experimental transmissions was Arthur Prince, the well-known ventriloquist.

Artistes will undoubtedly have to develop a definite technique for television, just as such a technique had to be developed for the stage, the screen, and the microphone. In television, of course, sudden movement is not desirable—it resembles cinematography in this respect—and already it has been found that some people conduct themselves to advantage before the transmitter by intuition, while others who are at their best on stage, screen or platform have not good "television style."

The range of vision will increase as mechanical improvements permit of a widening

sphere of operations. Starting, as I have suggested, with more or less "solo" items, an extension will be made in time to small parties and groups, and, later, we may expect full operas, plays, and other mass effects to be "televised."

There is nothing unusual in this suggestion of gradual development if we recall the birth and growth of broadcast telephony. In 1922 a half-hour programme was transmitted weekly from the Marconi Experimental Station at Writtle, and it took a few years to develop to the stage where the B.B.C. could efficiently broadcast operas from the Opera House, massed bands and choirs in the open air, and eye-witnesses' accounts of races and football matches.

In the same way the home television

service will be developed until we see and hear football matches, plays and operas at the moment of their taking place many miles away. The tance between the transmitter and the receiver does not matter. In television the transmission problem has never presented any serious difficulty, for any distance over which telephony can be sent can be bridged by electrical sight.

During the last two years regular experimental television transmissions have been conducted by Mr. Baird on 200 metres from his London station,

and long-distance tests have been carried out from his station at Coulsdon, Surrey, on 45 metres. Experimental receivers have been operated in different parts of the country for the purpose of reporting on these transmissions.

Listeners who have "tuned in" to these experimental transmissions on an ordinary radio set have heard the electrical impulses sent out as a varying rasping or humming sound.

Every object being "televised" has its own peculiar sound, and it is possible to recognise outstanding objects from their "image sound." When a hand is held before the transmitter a harsh rattling sound is heard, while a face has a softer tone. Every face has its own note, and as each movement causes it to change slightly it is

possible to hear a person opening his mouth, winking, or nodding his head.

Roughly speaking, a fat round face sends out a staccato note, while a thin face produces a smooth purring. If you tune in a transmission on a radio set and hear a humming "ze, ze, ze, ze," it may be the facial image of Mr. Black being conveyed through the ether, but when the sound changes to "zur, zur, zur, zur," it is probably because Mr. White has taken his place before the electric "eye" in the studio. When these sounds are tuned in, if a receiving televisor be connected to the radio receiver, the apparatus would transform the electric

the market which reproduces sound in the usual way and also shows an image of the player or singer on a screen. This will probably be arranged by using a double grooved record and a double needle—one needle will pick up the "image sounds" from one groove while the second needle simultaneously picks up the music from the other groove.

It was in 1912 that John Logie Baird, the son of a Presbyterian minister, first turned his attention to television, but it was not until 1922 that he decided to devote his whole time to a serious attempt to solve this problem.



TELEVISION IN MID-ATLANTIC.

On board the Cunard liner Berengaria, 1,500 miles out at sea (March 7, 1928), the chief wireless operator was able to recognise the image of his fiancée transmitted from London.

impulses, causing the sound to be tuned back into light, and the corresponding image would be seen on the screen.

An interesting development in connection with these "image sounds" is known as "Phonovision." Mr. Baird experimented in receiving the sounds and recording them on a phonograph; the record could then be played into the receiving televisor, when the image was reproduced on the screen in the usual way. Thus the living moving images of people and scenes may be stored on records and reproduced at any later time.

At the present time experiments of this "phonovision" are so far advanced that the near future may find a gramophone on

He first turned his attention to shadow transmission, believing this to be the right road, and in 1923 he was able successfully to demonstrate the sending of shadows. I have a letter from the late William le Queux in which he mentions that he was present at such a demonstration at Hastings. At this time, however, both Mihaly, an Austrian, and Jenkins, an American, were reported to have accomplished as much.

The inventor persevered, though dogged by ill health and lack of funds, for twelve months without further success. Then he succeeded in sending the outlines of simple objects in black and white, and in April, 1925, demonstrated this feat publicly at a



DAYLIGHT TELEVISION TRANSMITTER.

In facing, the person whose image is to be televised sits in ordinary daylight, no form of artificial light being required.

well-known Oxford Street store. At this stage it was impossible to recognise a face, for it was received as a blot of white light, and when the mouth was opened a black spot appeared.

The original Baird "televisor" with which the transmission of outlines was achieved can be seen in the Science Museum at South Kensington.

Mechanical and optical improvements enabled Baird to send clearer outlines, but true television, with the gradations of light and shade, was still a long way off. For months he worked to improve the apparatus, but he found, as had all earlier research workers since 1873, that the stumbling-block was the light-sensitive cell. He spared no pains to improve this part of the apparatus, and on one occasion even tried a cell constructed with the visual purple out of a human eye supplied by an interested surgeon!

One Friday, near the end of 1925, the inventor achieved the success he so richly deserved, for, on starting up his apparatus, instead of the usual black-and-white image, there appeared on the screen the image of the doll he was using, with half-tones and detail. Television was achieved at last.

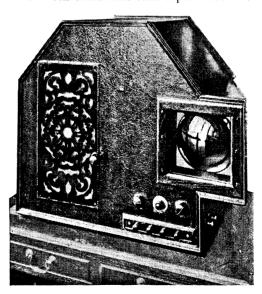
The use of the doll was necessitated by the fact that Baird had no assistance whatever through his long experiments. He worked alone in a small attic, without financial or technical help. It was, of course, the more to his credit that although lack of funds necessitated all his apparatus being of the "home-made" variety, precariously held together with glue, string, and sealing-wax, he outdistanced scientists working in the well-equipped laboratories of wealthy foreign firms.

On seeing the clear image of the doll, the inventor's first thought was to use a human model, and, rushing downstairs, he hastily "borrowed" the office-boy from a lower floor and bribed him with half a crown to come and sit before the transmitter. This boy—Taynton by name—was thus the first person in the world to be "televised."

In January, 1926, the first demonstration of true television was given by Mr. Baird before about forty members of the Royal Institution.

A brief description of the apparatus used may be of interest. At the transmitter a powerful lens collected the light reflected from the face and focused it upon the secret light-sensitive device after it had been passed through three revolving discs. The first of these was fitted with about thirty lenses in staggered formation and this revolved 800 times a minute. The second discs had a large number of radial slots and revolved about 4,000 times a minute. The third disc bore a spiral slot and revolved more slowly. These three discs broke up the image, causing the whole of it to fall on the light-sensitive cell in an exceedingly rapid succession of tiny light fragments of varying brilliance in about one-tenth of a second.

The cell transforms such rapid variations



A TELEVISOR FOR RECEIVING BOTH SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.

of light into electrical current variations, which are sent by wire or wireless to the receiver after being amplified.

The receiving "televisor" is arranged on somewhat similar lines, but in a more simple form and using only two revolving discs.

During the last two years the transmitting and receiving "televisors" have been gradually improved, with the result that the images sent have become larger and clearer and the amount of illumination required has been reduced.

The year 1927 saw a series of highly successful television transmissions between London and Glasgow, a distance of nearly 440 miles. These took place over the telephone lines between the Baird offices, near Leicester Square, London, and the Central Hotel, Glasgow. All present were much impressed with the clearness of the images on the receiving screen. When Mr. Baird himself appeared before the transmitter in London he was immediately recognised by the watchers in Scotland.

World-wide interest was aroused last February when the Atlantic was spanned by television and recognisable images of people in London were seen in New York, over 3,500 miles away. The signals were sent by land-line from London to the Baird transmitter at Coulsdon and there sent by wireless on 45 metres. They were tuned in at an amateur receiving station at Hartsdale, a suburb of New York. The New York Times referred to this demonstration in these terms: "His success deserves to rank with Marconi's sending of the letter S across the Atlantic."

Another sensational demonstration was arranged in March when, it will be remembered, wireless operator Brown of the Berengaria, when 1,500 miles from land, was shown and recognised the features of his fiancée who sat before the transmitter in London. A semi-portable "televisor" was used on board and the demonstration took place while all the normal wireless work of the ship was going on, the television apparatus not being affected in any way by the vibration or rolling of the vessel. In all these demonstrations only two operators were engaged, one at each end.

A further remarkable invention from the brain of this modern wizard is "Noctovision," or seeing in darkness or fog by television. In early days Mr. Baird found it essential to have his sitters in a blinding glare of light, so powerful as almost to scorch the skin, and he decided that it was essential

to reduce the amount of lighting required before his apparatus could be a commercial success.

He reduced it to the strength of daylight, but continued experiments showed that by making use of infra-red rays he could dispense altogether with visible light and see a person in total darkness or fog. The rays are outside the range of human eyesight, but the immensely sensitive electric "eye" of the televisor can readily detect them. Thus a person can sit before the transmitter in apparent total darkness and yet be clearly seen by television.

Demonstrations of "Noctovision" were given during the British Association meeting at Leeds in September, 1927. Long-distance tests were carried out, people sitting in a dark room in Leeds being clearly seen as though normally illuminated on the television screen in London.

Mr. Baird was good enough to arrange one of these 170-mile tests for my benefit at this time. I sat in a darkened room near Leicester Square and saw the moving features of Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Yelf, who was sitting in Leeds in total darkness.

"Noctovision" has aroused immense interest and has been demonstrated to representatives of four Governments. These invisible rays can be focused and flashed as an ordinary searchlight and are bound to prove of great value in the navigation of aircraft and shipping in darkness and fog.

In July last Mr. Baird demonstrated two outstanding developments. The first was television in normal daylight without any artificial lighting whatever—if the light is good enough for a photograph it is good enough for television. Among the scientists who witnessed this was Dr. J. A. Fleming, F.R.S., who referred to it as "a very striking advance." The other development was television in colours, which has been brought to a quite effective state; at a demonstration arranged for me by Mr. Baird on July 6th I was surprised at the clarity of the images and the vivid blue and red seen in the moving images.

With the introduction of radio-broadcasting great numbers of people took it up as the ideal hobby, and a result of this is that a large section of the public takes a real interest in scientific development.

Television is likewise in its early days proving attractive as a hobby, and numbers of constructors have built apparatus to carry out research work at home.

The Television Society, which was formed

early in the year and has Lord Haldane as President, is growing rapidly. It quickly looked to the interests of the amateur and made arrangements whereby constructors could obtain free the necessary sub-licence, without which they would infringe Mr. Baird's patents. Within the first few days of the licence being available applications for it reached four figures.

Constructors may either buy or build their selenium cell, while other necessary parts, such as focusing mirrors, interruptor discs, Neon lamps, electric motors, and reception screens, can be purchased from many

firms.

From being constantly referred to as "seeing by wireless," television is generally regarded as a branch of radio. Actually, however, the subject will be found to cover a vast field, for optics, chemistry, mechanics, electricity, telephony and wireless telephony will all play their parts in a television system. The study of television therefore involves an interest in the whole field of natural philosophy.

Many new words will be added to the vocabulary. Terms such as colloids, gels, abberation and refraction, will quickly become as familiar as are such wireless terms as aerial, condenser and wave-length.

As television develops it is likely to play

an ever-increasing part in our daily lives, although the full measure of its accomplishments is still shrouded in the mists of the future. As a fascinating form of home entertainment it will open a new world of interest, and lonely country dwellers will have brought to them sight of many things which they now know only by sound. We shall sit at home in our arm-chairs with a television screen by our side and witness events such as the State Opening of Parliament as they are actually taking place. Programmes of sight will also be relayed, just as telephony is to-day, so that we can exchange glimpses of important events with other countries, or even continents.

In the past few years radio telephony has successively enabled us to hear voices a hundred miles distant, then a thousand miles distant, then from the United States, and later from Australia and New Zealand. A few years have in fact girdled the world with speech.

In the same way wireless sight will almost certainly be accomplished over first a hundred miles, then a thousand miles, followed by sights from America, and later from Australia.

Television will, I am confident, prove to be one of the most important inventions of the era.

THE SHRUG.

WE all of us know it's a vale of woe,
And sometimes more than others,
When nothing's right and money's tight
And gloom the outlook smothers.
But it's not much good to fret and brood—
Dejection's a deadly drug—
So, when times are thin, give a wry old grin
And a shrug—like that—just a shrug.

I know it's steep if others reap
When you have done the sowing,
If in the race you lose your place
For all your heel and toeing.
But time will bring the pendulum swing,
So give your pride a tug—
A grin ironic's an excellent tonic,
And a shrug—like that—just a shrug.



THE BEST AMPLIFIER!

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE •

THE ADVENTURE OF THE RESOURCEFUL HEIR

By STEPHEN McKENNA

■ ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

,

"NOTWITHSTANDING anything to the contrary contained in my Will I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all my real and personal estate to such grandson of mine as shall be the first to marry within twelve calendar months from the date of this Codicil and shall within that period legally adopt the surname of Datchley and shall within six months of his marriage give an Undertaking to reside at Datchley Castle for not less than six calendar months in each year after my death. If there shall be no such grandson, then the provisions of my Will shall take effect."

Extract from the codicil to the last will and

testament of John Datchley.

I.

WAS perusing—I hoped, for the last time—the will which I had drawn for the late John Datchley, when my commissionaire came in to say that a lady and gentleman wished to see me. "Within six months of his marriage . . . ," I underlined. Bryan Abbotsford, a few days earlier, had exhibited the certificate of his marriage with Brenda Margaret Halliday, spinster, of the parish of Saint Mary's, Bayswater. I had caused the register to be checked; and we had taken the first step to secure a change of name by deed-poll. So far, however, Bryan had not given me the stipulated assurance that he would reside at Datchley Castle; and, as he had for purposes of his own been married to Brenda for several months before he deemed it prudent to make known the fact to that young lady's startled mother and to his own somewhat less startled solicitor, time had been running on till he had but few weeks to fulfil the last of his grandfather's conditions.

"And that, I imagine, is what brings you here to-day," I said, as we shook hands.

"You told us we ought to see the place first, Mr. Plimsoll," Brenda reminded me, "before Bryan committed himself."

"Yes! I wouldn't live there myself, if you gave me the castle," I answered without mincing my words.

"We were wondering," Bryan interrupted, what it means to reside at a place

"You mean, have you to sleep so many nights within such and such limits?" I asked. "Like keeping a term at a university? I might have to get a ruling from the court on that, but the intention of the will seems quite clear. The testator spent all his time at Datchley and unquestionably wished his heir to keep the place in commission. I don't think you could live in the fishing-lodge for a hundred and eighty-two and a half nights. It must be bona fide residence."

"In a place that you wouldn't accept as a gift," Brenda murmured in a tone that warned me of contests, if not of quarrels.

Her husband patted her hand reassur-

ingly:

"Wait till the place has been modernized!" Then he turned to me before she could make fresh objections: "Are we allowed a preliminary inspection? If I could get an architect to vet it . . ."

"I can arrange it," I answered. "You must remember all the time, though, that the place technically isn't yours yet. You

can make notes, but you mustn't give orders for alterations."

"If we can just spend a couple of nights there, it will be enough. Brenda has an idea she can't face it."

Bryan's admirably dispassionate tone—still more, his wife's manner of passionate obstinacy under a smiling front—made me feel rather guilty. It was I who had set these young people against a house which they had never seen; it was I who kept telling them that, in my opinion, old Datchley did not mean them to succeed; it was I who repeated, as one of the grandsons after another came to grief, that the survivors would be well advised to leave this treacherous inheritance alone.

"Don't pay extravagant attention to my prejudices," I said. "You're not old or morbid, you can fill the place with your friends. There's admirable salmon-fishing, by the way: the river runs under your windows.... In addition, the house is

solid and sound . . ."

"Then why are you so set against it?" asked Brenda, looking me in the eyes so piercingly that I was incapacitated from adorning the truth. "We've never seen it, remember, and you've not said more than two words about it. You've managed to make me feel your loathing of it, though."

"I suppose I've never got over my dislike for the old man," I answered. "If you'd ever seen him creeping about the stairs and passages in his old yellow dressing-gown and skull-cap... He went about in felt slippers," I added, "so that you never heard him till he was right on you... And the piping, high voice that was rather like a monkey's ... I stayed in the fishing-lodge last time I was there."

"But you'll stay in the house this time?"
"Certainly! The man's dead . . ."

Bryan stood up and held out his hand. The warm grip of his strong, brown fingers made me ashamed of my unwholesome fancies.

"Well, will you let us know when you're

ready to start?" he asked.

"Any time next week," I answered. "And don't try to form an impression of the place before you've seen it. If I'm prejudiced against Datchley Castle, it's because I'm prejudiced against John Datchley. When I saw his coffin lying in his own top room in his own peel-tower, I felt he was saying: 'This is my own place; and nobody's going to turn me out'. An absurd fancy, but that was my reason for telling you, when

last we discussed this, that his heir would have to be a man of resource. Well, I think you've shewn that you are, Bryan. You've outdistanced your rivals, you've outwitted your mother-in-law, you've outraged the court of chancery. By rights, you should be languishing in gaol at this moment for marrying Brenda without leave . . ."

"Instead of which, I've been sending you an invitation to our wedding," Bryan laughed. "The public one. Saint Margaret's, Westminster, on the first Tuesday of next month. By then I hope we shall have laid my unlamented grandfather's ghost for

ever."

TT.

WE travelled north six days later by the night mail to Inverness and reached Datchley in time for a late tea.

Several months had passed since I was last there; but, as I led Bryan, avidly observing and eagerly questioning, about the place, I received a curious impression that, for these months, time had been standing John Datchley had talked then of patching his drives after the damage inflicted by the lorries which had carried away half Datchley Forest to make pit-props in the The tar-barrels stood unopened where I had last seen them; and in the quarry I saw, unopened too, the dynamite that was to blast out the stone for metalling the road. A broken window in the east turret was still broken; some derelict scaffolding still encompassed a chimney not yet repaired. work had ceased when the old man took to his bed; it seemed to be waiting for him to set it going again; and I should hardly have been surprised to be told by Ferguson, the factor, that "Old Mortality" was still in bed.

"We might make a tour of the house before

the light goes," I suggested.

Brenda had become more and more silent as we drove from the station; and before she had time to people the castle with imaginary presences, I wanted to shew her that it was empty.

Bryan, evidently, was of the same mind. "We can certainly see the habitable

rooms," he agreed.

As well as I could remember, I guided them through every part of the castle, not omitting the new mausoleum. If I were asked to describe Datchley, I should try to give an impression first of age, strength and greyness: the castle, to me, always seemed to have shot up like a primeval stone flower from an immeasurable depth of grey-stone

Then I should suggest the idea of root. remoteness, perhaps of abandonment, as I thought of all this piled masonry set down on a tongue of high land between sea and river, with no more life to it than came from a leaping salmon or a screaming cur-And finally, though I repressed my fancy in the presence of Brenda, I might use the word "possession" to explain how, since I first went there as a young man, I had always felt that old Datchley "possessed" the place as a hidden cobra might possess a deserted well, or an unseen spider its web, or a ghost its walking-place. mean something more than "owning" or "inhabiting" or even "haunting": I can no more think of Datchley Castle without John Datchley than I can think of a tortoise without its shell.

For the rest, the house might have been turned out by mass-production, one of many hundreds scattered over Scotland and the north of England, with its square central tower and its added flanking turrets, its illlighted passages and break-neck spiral stairs. If it differed from others of its kind, the difference was one of dirt and disrepair. Its late owner had been content if the chimneys of his two rooms were swept once in five years and the windows mended once in ten.

"My first job," said Bryan, "will be to have the place wired throughout for electric light."

Brenda's only answer was a shiver.

"And have decent central heating put in," I recommended. "The place is like a tomb."

Brenda shrugged her shoulders as though to suggest that, with a mausoleum on the premises, this was the least that could be expected.

I felt that my comparison had been

unfortunate.

"It's really no more obtrusive than a private chapel," I said, though neither of us troubled to say what "it" was.

And, on that, we took her upstairs before she could "develop a complex", as Bryan put it. I cannot flatter myself that we robbed the mausoleum of its horrors, though I believe that my visit was more unpleasant for me than for the others. In the frame of the bed where I had always seen Datchley alive, a glass coffin jutted angularly against a black pall. The body, when I lifted a corner of the hangings, was hidden beneath a sheet; and, in some way, the vague outline was more disquieting than a visible

corpse. One felt that, if he was in fact dead, he could only have died that day.

We left the room more quickly than we had entered it. If I chose a needlessly long route back to our own quarters, this was because I wanted Brenda to feel that she was half a world away from that gruesome glass coffin; and, when I ostentatiously barred the iron door at the bottom of the peel-tower, it was to keep her from jerking her head round at every turn as though she thought some one was following her.

"This is better!" cried Bryan, as we came into the room where a cold meal had been laid for us. "I'm going to give you a whiskey-and-soda," he told his wife. "You've had a tiring journey . . ."

"It isn't the journey," Brenda interrupted, breaking silence for the first time since we entered the house. "Bryan, I can never live here!"

"My dear, you've hardly seen the place!"

he expostulated.

"I've seen enough to feel that it's haunted."

"Wait till I've lighted and warmed it! If you like I'll brick up the old ruffian's tower . . ."

"Don't talk of him like that!" Brenda

whispered in horror.

"I can't hurt him and he can't hurt us," Bryan was rejoining, when the door creaked open and reduced him to startled silence.

As the curtains were already bellying in the wind, Brenda might have known that the wind—and nothing more—had burst open the door. This did not keep her from screaming; and, while Bryan and I, instead of shutting it, embarked on reassuring speeches, the lamp on the table was blown out.

If we had been as rational as we pretended, either Bryan or I should have taken steps to light it again without hesitation; as it was, we stood silent for a full minute, facing the door as though we expected something to attack us. This time Brenda did not cry out, but I am far from sure that her deathlike stillness was not more disconcerting than her earlier panic. There was a tremor in Bryan's voice as he said:

"Keep calm! I've got a torch somewhere."

While he hunted for it, I looked for a match-box. We all moved, for some unknown reason, as though the faintest sound would be our undoing. When our hands met in the dark, we snatched them away as though we had been stung. And, while

by now we could see the outline of the door, none of us abandoned the protection of the table to shut it.

When at last a light flared, Brenda's hand was trembling so much that she missed the wick of the lamp; and two matches had been blown out before any one thought to close the window. By now the door was shut; and, as the lamp began to shine, Bryan discovered his torch on the sideboard. I was about to provide against similar misadventures by lighting the fire, when I saw Brenda staring at something in her hand.

"Did you give me this?" she asked her husband.

"This" was a box of safety-matches in an enamelled white holder with BEDROOM in blue letters.

"It must have been Mr. Plimsoll," said Bryan.

"I was looking for them myself," I said. Brenda let fall the box and kicked it wildly across the room.

"Some one pushed it into my hand!" she sobbed. "And then the door shut!"

It was not the moment for too nice adherence to truth.

"Well, it must have been me," I said, "but I didn't recognize it as the matches.

I'm sorry if I startled you."

I do not suppose for a moment that she believed me; and for myself I did not know what to believe except that I had not noticed matches of any kind before and that I did not remember even automatically bringing down one of these boxes from upstairs. Bryan-or Brenda herself-might have done so; there were similar boxes in several of the bedrooms, including under that heading John Datchley's mausoleum; and it seemed better for me to pretend that I had carried it off without thinking than to let Brenda cherish a more far-fetched explanation.

Bryan, in swiftly changing the subject,

seemed to share my feelings.

"If you don't object to talking shop at dinner, sir, I should like to discuss those plans," he told me. "I had a look at them in the train last night . . ."

And so, for the length of our melancholy discussed water-power drainage-schemes. When we came to internal changes, Bryan tried to tempt his wife into the conversation, but she would only contribute shrugs or absent nods. At the end, as I was hoping that a meal of cold trout, galantine and champagne had revived her spirits, she announced again that she could never live at Datchley.

"And I shall camp out to-night," she

"They'll rig you up a bed at the fishing-lodge," I said, "if you feel as strongly as that about it. I think it's a mistake, though, to run away so soon.'

"If I don't go now . . . ," Brenda muttered, then left the sentence unfinished.

Bryan grimaced at me to shew that I must not press her.

"When she's seen the place by daylight

"Oh, I'm not coming back here!" she interrupted.

"If you mean to carry out the terms of the will . . . ," I ventured.

"I don't care what happens about the will."

Once more the conversation was changed by Bryan's asking me if he would fulfil the conditions of residence by living on the estate, in one of the lodges or a new house. I had to say that this was an evasion of the testator's obvious wishes.

"We can keep the place in commission," he argued, "without actually sleeping here."

"I doubt if the court would allow that," I said.

"Well, the will says nothing about my wife. Brenda can sleep elsewhere."

"I'd no more let you sleep here than I'd sleep here myself!" she cried.

"But what's the objection?" I asked.

She would only shrug her shoulders and say that she wanted me to shew her the way to the fishing-lodge.

III.

On our way thither, under a full moon, with a wind blowing in from the Atlantic, she recovered something of her usual courage.

"I won't pretend I'm not afraid of ghosts," she began without preamble, "but this is worse than any ghost. There's an atmosphere of evil about that house. All the selfishness, the cruelty, the wickedness of that old man have somehow survived. He's stayed behind to poison the place."

As she paused, abashed at her own vehemence, Bryan asked me if there was any objection to his having old Datchley's coffin removed and buried.

"That's no good!" Brenda broke in swiftly. "He left his horrible body behind to frighten us; but, when all's said and done, it's only an old man's skin and bones. You may take them away, but you won't take away the spirit that's brooding there."
"Short of exorcism," I began, "of which

I am wholly ignorant . . ."

"You can leave the place alone," said Brenda hysterically. "It's an accursed place. I wouldn't live there. If the court said we might build a new house, I wouldn't have a book or picture . . . If there's no way of getting round the will, Bryan, you must give up the money."

We walked the rest of the way in silence; and, rather to my surprise, Bryan left me, after his wife had gone to bed, and walked over, without explanation, to the factor's house. Next day he asked me to look after Brenda while he motored to Inverness; and, when I reminded him that I had several days' work to do, he said that he would telegraph for his brother Martin to hold the party together.

"He can keep her amused," said Bryan, and he can help me. I shall be fairly

busy too, ferreting round."

The following afternoon Martin Abbotsford arrived from London. I resigned Brenda to his care and spent my days in old Ferguson's office. How Bryan or Martin spent theirs I did not enquire: it was an unwritten rule that in Brenda's presence we should not discuss the castle; and it only came up in conversation over our last whiskey-and-soda if Bryan wanted a dispensation from my decree that he was not to lay hands on the fabric. On the first evening he asked for my permission to excavate a disused house-drain; on the next he applied for leave to send an electrical engineer to explore the ceilings and walls.

"This place grows on me," he murmured, as we prepared to turn in. "I don't mean the castle, but the sea, the river, that great sweep of purple creeping up to the first slopes of the mountains."

"Is it growing on Brenda?" I asked.

"She loves the place if only we could get

rid of the house."

"Damocles loved his palace," I said, "but he would have loved it even more if he could have got rid of the sword over his head. I can't help thinking, Bryan, that you're starting at the wrong end: it's no good planning all these changes until you've persuaded her to live there."

Bryan walked to the window and pulled the curtains apart. Two miles away the square tower and conical turrets of the castle shone like silver in the moonlight.

The spray of the river hung and glistened as the racing water plunged through its gorge into the sea. As a filmy train of clouds scudded across the sky, the mullioned windows darkened and gleamed again like winking eyes deep-set in an old man's rugged, grey face. That, I reflected as I turned away, was the only hint of life in the frowning, deserted castle; and for the first time I understood something of Brenda's antipathy. Though I am not unduly fanciful, I should not have relished walking alone to this great stone tomb, as she would have to walk a hundred times a year. More than electric light and draught-proof doors would be required to banish the eeriness of those rustling stone passages and echoing stairs. And, though one bricked up a doorway, one did not so easily close the corridor of memory that led back to the mausoleum. In imagination I saw again the blinded windows and the defiant glass coffin. If I stood long before it, I should come to fancy that the sheet had moved. Admittedly Brenda feared the "old man's skin and bones" less than his spirit; in her place I would not have remained even within two miles of the castle.

"There's going to be a tussle over this," confessed. "Brenda's adamant. Brvan She won't let me go over by day, even, unless I have Martin or one of these engineer fellows with me; and she'll renounce the old sinner's money without turning a hair. don't give in quite so easily. It's not the money that attracts me first of all: I feel this is a private quarrel between Gaffer Datchley and me. He did his best to spoil my mother's life; and she helped to spoil his by making an indecently happy marriage on sixpence a year. Honours easy. He carried the war into the next generation by setting us all to fight one another for his miserable money; and we've counterattacked him in the next world by remaining good friends and arranging to divide the money in the way he'd hate most. The game's a bit in our favour, but he hasn't done yet. Unless we're very careful, he's going to win with his last card by frightening us away. I propose to play my ace of trumps."

"By which you mean?"

Bryan chuckled malevolently:

"I'm going to frighten him away."

"By exorcism?"

"That's not a bad description, but you mustn't ask me questions. I'll tell you one thing: eloping with a ward in chancery is

child's-play to this. If I fail, it will be more like seven years than two months. But it's the only way. And I'd risk more than that to beat Gaffer."

"If I mayn't ask questions, I may still offer advice. I suppose you're going to have the coffin removed? Don't forget that, when you've frightened Datchley away, as you call it, you must still persuade Brenda to live in his place."

"I think we can get round that."

Dropping into chairs, they called huskily for long drinks; and, while I ministered to their thirsts, Brenda carried in a basin and washed their blackened and battered hands. What they had been about they would not divulge. With a nervous giggle Martin said that they had been "moving things"; Bryan, in the same state of suppressed excitement, added that they had been "getting on with the good work".

"I hope you've finished it," I said.



"Dropping into chairs, they called huskily for long drinks."

"You won't get round the law," I answered a little testily.

"Then I shall drive a coach-and-horses

through it!"

When I came down to breakfast next day, I found that Bryan had already gone out, taking Martin with him. As they did not know when they would be back, Brenda had supplied them with sandwiches; and in fact they did not appear until we were getting ready for dinner. I doubt if I have seen in all my life two young men so dirty, so dishevelled or so completely exhausted.

"I must go back to London to-morrow."

"We've done the best with the instruments at our disposal. D'you mind if we don't dress? There's going to be such a lovely sunset," he added, looking over my shoulder towards the castle. "I shouldn't like to miss it."

"As you're facing due north . . . ," I

began.

Then, in the glass of a picture on the wall opposite me, I saw the reflection of a rosy glow. Turning, I saw something that reminded me of a naval engagement as

shewn in old pictures, with a towering ship of war firing a broadside. Simultaneously and continuously a red stream poured out of every window on the side of the castle facing us. As though in truth each window had been a gun, the fire was accompanied by a dense column of smoke and followed by a dull roar.

With an hysterical shout, Bryan seized his wife and danced her round the room to

the tune of Nuts in May. "How can we live at Datchley, dear,

When there isn't a Datchley to live at?"

IV.

I had not realized the awful beauty of a great fire. This one paralysed me.

From the outset, indeed, I saw that there was nothing to be done. The fire had taken hold; and a regiment of men with an armoury of pumps would not have availed

to put it out.
"This has happened rather conveniently for me," said Bryan, abandoning his wardance and coming to join me by the window.

I am almost sure that this was the moment when I first suspected arson. In so far as I had been able to think at all hitherto, I had been saying to myself: "An old house. Deserted and full of rubbish. Electricians with naked lights climbing all over the place . . ." Then it occurred to me that there was more of triumph than of innocent relief in Bryan's caperings; and I remembered the state of his hands and clothes. These two boys might well look rather exhausted if they had been rolling to the house the two or three dozen barrels of tar which old Datchley had laid in for the repair of his drives. I wondered whether they had made use of the blasting-powder from the quarry; and instinctively I drew back from the window.

"As you value your freedom," I said, "don't tell me anything that I don't want to know!"

Bryan assumed the mocking air of a fashionable criminal in a "crook" play, defying the baffled representatives of the

"I wasn't proposing to tell you any-"For my own inforthing!" he laughed. mation, though, you might say if a man is or is not allowed to do what he likes with his own. If I'd taken possession under the will, would there have been anything to keep me from putting a match to the place? Gaffer Datchley seems to have overlooked that possibility when he insisted that his

heir should live here."
"And you," I said, "seem to have overlooked the fact that this is not your own, to do what you like with! The property is held in trust . . ."

"Fun for the trustees!" Bryan cried. "What will they do? What can they

"Whatever they do, there'll be enquiries. It's against public policy, public safety, for unexplained fires to break out . . ."

Bryan looked from the blazing castle to the glowing sky and calmly lighted a

cigarette.

"I doubt whether the enquiries will lead anywhere," he observed. "When this fire has burned itself out, there'll be precious little evidence to shew how it started. Accidents do happen, you know; and, if this wasn't an accident, I should be greatly interested to know how a charge of foul play is to be supported. Not that you'll bring one! You can trust me not to say anything that will embarrass you. It's not as though an insurance company was being let in"

"The insurance company is liable. You think it will cause no comment if I say nothing and just omit to make a claim?"

"It will cause a good deal more comment if you do! You can't claim, because the place isn't insured. One of grandpapa's little economies. I took the precaution of finding that out from the factor; and he says that to the best of his belief you haven't insured on behalf of the trustees. An oversight, I suppose; but, once again, accidents do happen. I suppose your office would be rather unkindly criticized if it came out in the enquiry that you'd done nothing to protect my interests. Not that it will! I don't believe anything is coming of this enquiry, though we can't prevent it if the police want one."

As he laughed impudently in my face, I remembered for my chastening that it was I who had said John Datchley's heir must be a man of resource. I could afford to ignore the gentle hint that I should be exposed for gross negligence if I pressed my enquiries too far; and I presumed that I could hardly be charged with compounding a felony when none had been established. Bryan was watching me with a smile of defiance; and I realized that he was entitled to defy me. I was not going to promote a prosecution when no one, dead or living, had been injured. If he had carried his

resourcefulness to the point of warning the police and of waiting till he had entered into possession, he might have burned down the castle as light-heartedly as other men blew up their unwanted greenhouses. And, however strong my suspicions, I had no evidence; there were no witnesses; a prosecution would break down.

"You have still to live here for six months in the year," I reminded him.

"On a heap of cinders?"

"I've no doubt the court will order you to rebuild. Is Brenda prepared for that? From her language on our first night I fancied that she would not be content till a plough had been driven over the ruins and salt sown in the foundations."

Bryan looked with faint uneasiness from the fire to his still, mesmerized wife and from his wife back to the fire. What, I felt he was asking himself, if it died down before its work was accomplished? By now the flames were no longer spurting through the gutted windows but were seeking an outlet through the roof. From the intermittent crashes that punctuated the steady roar of the fire I surmised that the woodwork—doors, panelling and floors—had by now fallen in and were blazing in a vast central heap; but the woodwork was a small part of the castle and, when the fire had smouldered to extinction, I was prepared to find the walls and stone floors, the vaults and steps, which had stood for a thousand years, standing still. As I watched, the flames burst through the roof in a dozen places; and, as the circles of fire widened out and met, the square stone tiles collapsed and disappeared with the rattle of pebbles against a window-pane. Soon there would be only the open shell of the castle; but it was idle to pretend that a new roof could not be built.

"At the present rate you'll very soon be able to drive your plough through the ruins," Bryan boasted. "Ah!"

At his exclamation I turned again to the window and saw one of the strangest sights in all my life. The conical top of the turret nearest to us rose and fidgeted, like the lid over a kettle of boiling water; then, ceasing to fidget, it rose steadily, swaying away from the corner of the castle. I thought of a gigantic caber being lifted slowly, then suddenly tossed. When the cone was some ten feet above its fellows, the entire turret collapsed; and the window through which we were staring, two miles away, rattled with the shock and roar of the explosion.

So the blasting-powder from the quarry had not been overlooked.

At intervals of two minutes the other turrets rose and crumbled. Then the walls, mined from the vaults, fell in; and at the end of half an hour only the central square tower remained.

I observed Martin staring at it with knitted brows, as though he suspected an error in his calculations.

"I'm going to prospect," he murmured. As we made our way to the scene of the eruption, we were joined by stray silent men, whom I took to be servants on the estate assembled from their scattered cottages by such a tumult as might be heralding the end of the world. They asked no questions, they made no comments even to one another; and, if they had helped Bryan to drench the place in tar and oil, they could hardly have shewn less surprise at the result. There was little enough surprise, too, on the face of the old factor when we halted beside him at a prudent distance from the disintegrating castle, though he welcomed us with a cordiality which I did not understand until he admitted his fear that some of us might have been caught by the fire.

"Fortunately, we were over at the lodge when it broke out," said Bryan. "Does

any one know how it started?"

"Some say ane thing, some anither," replied the factor with the oracular obscurity affected by ancient Greek choruses and modern Scottish retainers. "I'll no say but what we were looking for something of the kind."

I thought that Bryan was growing uncomfortable under the calm, blue-eyed scrutiny of the taciturn factor. The wind had dropped; and a column of black smoke was rising straight to heaven as I have only seen smoke rise from a volcano. Of fire there was no sign; and I suspected that Bryan was wondering what traces of his preparations would come to light when the charred ruins had cooled sufficiently to let us inside the blackened shell of the castle.

"Do you mean," he asked with well-assumed incredulity, "that some one set

light to the place on purpose?"

"Ye would not be looking for spontaneous comboostion in an unoccupied house," the factor replied with mild sarcasm.

"Is there any one you . . . suspect?"

asked Bryan, gulping.

"There's no a man or woman in Datchley that would set foot in the castle by night with Old Mortality lying unburied in his room. It's well for you that the young leddy brought you all away to the lodge. I laid your table that night with my ain hands; and ye wad ha' been constrained to mak your ain beds on the morrow if ye'd bided there."

the ruins of the later gothic walls and turrets.

"Some wad say," he answered cautiously, "that Old Mortality has been there all the while. Deid? Oh, aye! Though he refused Christian burial. I've haird it said



"Before we could move, the explosion was upon us."

"Then who do you suggest . . . ? "I began.

The factor's piercing blue eyes shifted from my face and fixed themselves on the square tower which now stood alone, for the first time in eight hundred years, dominating that Old Mortality had no love for his ain flesh and bluid. Oh, aye, he's deid! And deid men have never been known to walk!"

I had an odd feeling that I was being present at the very birth of a legend.

"Is that what the people here are saying?" I asked.

"Some say ane thing, some anither. There's some . . . ," he continued, then stopped abruptly and pulled us back a pace.

In the growing darkness a light had become visible through the lowest windows in the earth shook, but we were on the far side of the river and this may have been my imagination. I remember that Martin threw himself on his face and that Brenda screamed.

As soon as I could see again after that first flash, I watched the literal disappearance of Datchley Castle. The first fires and



tower. In a moment it had spread as though the flames were licking at a spilt trail. A red glow mounted to the upper windows; and tongues of fire darted through the holes in the roof.

"I should stand back, if I were you," said Martin nervously.

Before we could move, the explosion was upon us. I remember a roar that deafened and a glare that blinded me. I believe the

explosions must have piled the ground high with glowing embers; the second scattered them. If any one will think of a hearth fifty feet square buried under a mountain of red-hot wood-ash, if he will then imagine a charge of dynamite fired under the middle of the hearth, and if he will then picture the wood-ash blown sky-high in a fountain of flame, he may get some idea of the explosion that levelled Datchley with the ground. In

the brief silence that followed, we could hear the echoes flung backwards and forwards between mountains that we could not see; then the night was swallowed in an avalanche of noise as the walls crashed down into a raging lake of fire.

'There's some," I heard the factor continuing, "who wad say that the deil had

come to claim his ain."

V.

WE returned without a word to the lodge.

"I'm going to give you some whiskey, Mr. Ferguson," I said. "Nothing more to be done to-night."

"There's nothing more to be done any time," answered the factor. "Where young Mr. Datchley is to live . . ."

"My name's Abbotsford at present," said Bryan. "I suppose I shall have to take the name of Datchley."

"It was your mither's name. And it was held in honour till Old Mortality was taken daft. Ye'll be living here, Mr. Abbots-

I saw Bryan trying to read his wife's

thoughts.

"That's a condition in my grandfather's will," he answered, "but I can't live here till I've a house to live in."

Brenda roused with a start from the trance in which she had been wrapped since we hurried out of the lodge an hour before.

"Will you have to rebuild on the same

site?" she asked.

"There or thereabouts, I suppose," said Bryan, with an interrogative glance at me. "It's hardly 'residing at Datchley' if we

build a new house the other end of the highlands. Are you still thinking of the old man?"

"I was wondering what had happened to him," she confessed. "I shouldn't like to think he was being built into the founda-

Mr. Ferguson permitted himself the one smile that I have seen on his forbidding face since I first made his acquaintance half a life-time ago.

"Old Mortality will not trouble you again, ma'am," he assured her. "Ye did not obsairve? There was a grand noise of

breaking glass . . . "

"His coffin!" Brenda muttered with a

"And the man himself shot up," continued Mr. Ferguson with sombre relish, "like a leaping salmon. Ye no haird the splash as he came down in the river? We have seen the last of Old Mortality. . . . And now, ma'am, now, sirs, I am keeping you from your supper. I wish ye all a very guid night."

I saw him to the door and came back to find Bryan standing by the window with his arm about Brenda's shoulders. I heard a murmur about "trumping the old sinner's

ace ".

"I must go back to London to-morrow," I told them. "And I expect you won't be sorry to come too. The last six months must have been a wearing time, but I hope we may assume that your adventures are over now."

The young people exchanged glances.

"I should have said they were just beginning," said Brenda.

Hereafter follows The Farewell to Adventure.

SOMEONE LEFT ROSES.

SOMEONE has left a bowl of roses Here in this quiet room, Shedding around, as one supposes, Thoughts that are sweet as damask roses When dawn each sleeping bud uncloses After the night's still gloom.

Someone has left behind her roses, Ere on her way she passed, Here in this room which now encloses Dreams of a place where joy reposes, Bringing back fragrance of old roses That were too frail to last.

DOROTHY DICKINSON.

IN THE ROUGH

By E. CHARLES VIVIAN

Author of "Nine Days," "The Forbidden Door," "Man Alone," etc.

In the corn lands, where the stubble crackled underfoot until the ploughs trembled as their shares drove furrows through the steely clods, they said it would never rain again. It was a "short straw year," for the drought had held since June; the dams were half empty, and many a settler gazed anxiously at the sky morning after morning and evening after evening, only to turn away in despair of change before winter should grip the earth. The cattle grew lean and restless, for there was little nutriment in the browned grass, and only in valley bottoms had there been a second crop of hay.

But up in "the rough," as they called the tumbled slopes to northward, the long drought seemed to have made little difference. True, the stretches of bracken under the eternal shade grew brittle-leaved earlier than their wont, and here and there were cracks in the ground where the winds prevented leaf-mould from forming, but the miles and miles of trees, giants of ages, sucked moisture from deep springs and reared their browning crests no less proudly than in normal seasons, when the patter of rain on the leaves was like the hissing of a swarm of serpents.

Ben Galt, who knew the rough better than any other man—excepting, perhaps, Swinford, the warden for the Alleynia Pulp and Timber Syndicate—had odd fancies regarding the trees. Long before the Syndicate acquired their thousands of acres, he had known these trees, roamed and hunted in their shades, and, observant by nature, learned little things concerning them that few men of the corn lands knew. Sometimes he regretted having taken the post of "marker" for the Syndicate, a task which involved marking off, each autumn, the trees destined to fall victims to the logging gangs when winter had come. Sometimes he thought they knew, those trees, and must count him a traitor: for these dark forests had given him of their peace, and now he moved among them as no less than murderer of their proudest and best.

But he remained marker to the Syndicate because of Lal Swinford.

He had become aware of her slowly: all his mental processes were slow, as is common with those who live close to Nature, unless they grow cunning and mean. There was nothing either cunning or mean about Ben Galt; he was largely built, physically, active enough in either work or play, shy as a mole with women, and with the heart of a child more or less controlled by the brain of an incurable dreamer.

Swinford valued Galt for his intimate knowledge of the forests, knew he could never find such another, and often, out of the logging season, sent for him to consult over the well-being of some tract, the advisability of cutting here and putting in saplings there. For the Syndicate nursed and tamed the forests, broke them to use, enslaved and slew where of old had been freedom and full length of life. Swinford would nod approvingly as some giant or other that had been a tree when his grandfather had been a dandled baby crashed down, but Galt would watch the fall with a queer ache in his throat, wondering if the tree would lay this crime to his account.

Swinford's house of squared logs stood in a tiny clearing, nearly three miles in from the edge of the corn lands. Entering the forest shade from the open, you went up a long, gentle rise, and from its summit dropped steeply to a hollow over which mighty larches mourned. Thence another gentle ascent, up which the narrow woodland track had been cut in a great, sweeping curve, led through decaying acres of beech-mast, and yet more acres of rustling oak leaves, past a trickling spring of which the longest drought could not quench the output—and abruptly, within thirty yards of the spring, you came on Swinford's front door.

The sudden opening out to the little clearing was shocking, in a way, to a stranger, who would never have expected to find human works dispelling the shade so near the perpetual gloom of the spring. It was an unjustifiable invasion, a wrong to nature, insult to the forest . . .

Ben Galt never saw it in that way. He would come up to Swinford's door and

knock, to face Lal.

"Your father sent for me, Miss Swinford." She would stand aside, and he would enter, intent on the errand for which Swinford had demanded his presence. At first, that is, but later he would get the warmth of her welcoming smile, realise the graciousness of her presence, and steal, to take away with him, some of the golden glint from her hazel eyes. In the last stages of all, he would daringly wonder what it would be like if her fine, rounded arms were about his neck, if he might hold her close and whisper—as the oak leaves whispered before they fell—that she had grown into his heart and filled it, wound herself round and into his thoughts as the wistaria winds itself round and among the bole and branches of an ash. But Lal was stronger than wistaria, he knew: she was straight and fine as a young silver birch that grew near the crest of Leggat's Ridge, and the golden light in her eyes was such as shines, in late fall, from the leaves in a beech-grove. And fer grace, he knew, no straight young pine along the heights of Baldock's Crag could compare with her.

He learned these similes for her slowly, and, for a year after he had learned them, let her know nothing of his love for her, except that he found her rare ferns, made little, queer carvings of furze roots for her, and advised her regarding the tendance of a species of leek with which she tried to make a border for the little flower-bed she had planted in front of Swinford's log dwelling.

II.

The long drought still held, and there was a bite in the air, promise of winter, when Ben Galt came up the track one morning, and paused at sight of Lal, emerging from the front doorway of Swinford's house with a bucket. He moved swiftly.

"Let me fetch it for you, please."

She yielded the bucket with a nod and a smile, and Ben made the journey to and from the spring with a song in his heart. But Lal frowned in dismay when she saw what he had brought.

"I couldn't carry it without spilling, as full as that," she objected. "I never try to carry more than three-quarters."

"Where d'you want it?" Ben asked.

"By the sink at the back—but I didn't mean you——"

But Ben had picked up the bucket again and set off, and she had to follow him. He put it down and faced her.

"I'm—I'm glad to help you," he said.
"It was good of you," she told him.
"Dad's away down at Altera, and I'm all alone here till to-morrow."

"Don't you get scared?" Ben asked. She shook her head and smiled. "The

trees are company," she said.

His slow smile and nod expressed agreement. "Most folks don't see it that way," he said, "but if you get to know the trees, they're mighty friendly. But you get lonely, don't you, sometimes?"

Lal nodded. "Sometimes," she agreed,

Lal nodded. "Sometimes," she agreed, "but Dad's good to me. Last month I went down to Altera for dances eight

times."

"Heap of fun, dancing?" Ben interrogated.

Lal's hazel eyes gleamed laughter. "Such fun—don't you dance?"

He shook his head, slowly and regretfully. "Never tried," he said, "but I'd learn, for you"

"You ought to learn for yourself," she pointed out. "It's—there's nothing like it."

"I'd do anything for you," he said

abruptly, suddenly daring.

"Oh, but you mustn't," she answered. And he saw how she shrank back ever so little at the implication his avowal contained.

"Mustn't?" he questioned. "Why, I never see a tree in the forest that's beautiful without thinking of you, and never get on a ridge and look over toward the plains—one of the most beautiful sights God made for us—without wanting you to share it all. I—you—Lal, I've got to tell you."

"No," she whispered.

It was a breath rather than a word, but, backed by the look in her eyes, it checked him. The light went out of his own eyes as he gazed at her.

"No?" he echoed.

"No," she answered, after a long interval.

"For—there's John, and John—John and I—"

After a still longer interval Ben Galt spoke.



"Don't you—don't you be sorry," he said slowly. "I've got—there's the trees—and you've got John. Nothing for you

to be sorry about. I ought to-to kept

you don't mind my calling you Lal, this once? I've got so I say your name, up where only the trees and God can hear it,

so-just to call you by it this once. won't again."

"Oh, Ben, you make me feel so small.

I'm so sorry----"

"But I don't want to make you sorry. You go right on and be glad-I'm going in marking for the gangs. You tell your father to-morrow when he comes back that I've gone in. And you go right on, you and John-he's a good man, John Cartwright, and if there's anything I can do——"

He faced about and tramped away so abruptly that Lal gave a little gasp. saw him receding, vanishing from the clearing, and there was something so pathetic about the unaccustomed droop of his shoulders that she had to shake the tears from her eyes more than once as she went about her daily tasks. Not even the thought of John could cheer her altogether that day.

III.

LAL SWINFORD dreamed, that night, that she was dancing with John Cartwright in Keegan's hall in Altera, and as they danced the board floor suddenly became thunderously noisy, while John called her name again and again. The rattling, insistent noise of the floor grew louder, and with a start she sat up, more than half awake, to hear a hammering, jolting uproar somewhere, and somebody calling-" Lal-Lal! Lal, for God's sake—Lal!"

The uproar was real, no dream. flung back her bedclothes, got out, and pulled off the coverlet to wrap it round her before she went to the front door, where the drumlike tattoo still went on until she opened and looked out, fearfully. A shadowy giant struck a match, and showed her the face of Ben Galt, sweating, panting, unfamiliar.

"Lal—don't stop to dress—put on anything you can quick! Fire coming down

from Leggat's Ridge."

Now she got the acrid tang in the air, and saw, when the light of the match failed, that there was a glow, redder than moonlight, threatening and fateful, in the dome of the sky. Somewhere far off, too, was a crackling roar that grew in volume even as Ben Galt spoke.

"I'll be quick," she promised.

Scarcely a minute had passed when she came out, slippered, cloaked, trembling, but in that minute the glow had grown to light, and the distant crackling had become a thunderous roar. Galt almost leaped at her and gripped her hand, and now the light of the marching flames had grown so that she could see the fear in his face.

"Three miles—near on three miles," he "You've got to make it, Lal-I was asleep under Leggat's Ridge——"

He pulled her away from the door, impelled her to a jog-trot rather than a walk, and, when they had passed the spring in the forest shade, she became conscious that his grip on her hand was hurting her. the light about them, and the roaring terror that advanced on them, kept her from protest. Galt forced her down the long slope

in a way that rendered her breathless, giddy, and near on tears.

There was little wind, fortunately. Diagonally behind them the forest fire strode forward, and they could see its steps by the glare that leaped and failed as tree-top after tree-top blazed and died out. They were near on the end of the slope when Lal suddenly faltered, a half-stumble that ended with a little cry of pain; she had twisted her foot in a rut, and Ben's arm stole round

"I'll carry you?" he asked.
"No—no!" She limped a little, but struggled on. "I shall—we shall get out

"You've got to get out," said Ben Galt. His arm went round her waist, and, cleverly as any dancer, he kept step with her and forced her on. They came to the steep slope of the ravine that one must climb to win out to the long descent to open plain, and here the billowing, luminous smoke reached out and enfolded them in rolling clouds, so that the tears poured from Galt's eyes and he could scarcely see the track for their ascent.

Lal felt herself borne up as if in a giant's hand. The steep slope slipped down behind her, and the still air grew clearer; up at the limit of the rise there was enough clarity for sight, and when she had blinked away the tears caused by the smoke in the hollow she could see that all of the track ahead was lighted by a reddish glow, while, high overhead, flakes of fire flickered along the underside of a luminous, greyish smoke curtain that shut out the stars. And a roaring, crackling horror moved along the ravine from which they had ascended, a giant devourer that derived its strength from the months of drought, and ate trees as a gourmet eats whitebait.

"You saved me," she said, in the pause that Galt made at the end of the climb from

the ravine.

"Else, I couldn't have lived," he answered. "Come on, Lal."

"Aren't we safe, here?"

"The night wind may come up at any minute. We'd be cut off-come on, Lal. You've got to get out."

He shouted it, for in the floor of the ravine they had left a thousand devils cackled laughter, and behind the smoke curtain the flames rolled upward so that they could almost feel the heat. Galt gripped Lal's hand and urged her forward.

"Can you run?" he asked.

"Try me," she answered.

Her slippered feet pattered noiselessly over the leaf-mould of centuries, and Galt's grip urged her on. Overhead the redtinged smoke-clouds rolled, and the light on their undersides illumined the track. Galt prayed to God to hold back the night wind, for he knew that, if it rose before they reached the open, it would drive the fire across the track before them, and cut off her escape.

And the fire marched up the side of the ravine, far more swiftly than they had climbed, for where they took steps the flame leaped, and its roaring joy was the deathsong of the trees Galt loved. That glow, he knew, was the blaze of gracious pines on Baldock's Crag, away to their left—and when the night wind came up it would drive in the flame toward the track along which they struggled. Would they win out to the open in time?

He was half carrying, half dragging Lal The flaming pines on Baldock's Crag made a gigantic torch that lighted all the track ahead, and heat came threatfully out at them from the furnace that grew ever larger and nearer to left of the track. Lal's breath came and went in sobs, for the climb out from the ravine had exhausted her, and, with but half their journey done, Galt began to despair of winning to the open.

"Why—why should you die too?" she gasped.

"What's life to me, if you don't live?" he retorted.

Then with renewed impetus he dragged at her, for, a score yards or more ahead of them, he saw how a man struggled with the reins of a horse. Lal stumbled and dragged heavily, and at that Ben Galt picked her up in his arms and carried her.

He could feel, even in this deadly peril, the soft, shuddering warmth of her body in her night-gear, and her forearm, clasping his neck, was like velvet against his cheek.

For moments only this joy of her nearness —a joy that even the flaming hell from which he ran could not kill-and then he set her down, ran to the head of the horse, and heard her cry:

"John—Oh. John!"

IV.

BEN GALT gripped the bridle, close down by the bit, and tried to soothe the plunging

"Where's Swinford?" John Cartwright shouted.

"In at Altera—she was alone," Ben "Get mounted, man-seconds answered. count!"

Cartwright put a foot in the stirrup: the horse was quietening as Ben soothed it. Lal Swinford crouched among the dead leaves, sobbing.

"I thought of her, but this brute jibbed at the fire, so I had to get off to lead him," Cartwright explained, and found his second stirrup. Not till then did Galt release his hold on the bridle; perhaps twenty seconds had passed when he ran to Lal and lifted her in his arms again.

"Take her in front of you, Cartwrightastride-hold on to her.'

For the tiniest fraction of a second the clasp of his arms about her tightened in a wordless farewell, and then he heaved her up, saw Cartwright's arm go round her waist as she settled before him. Red smokeclouds, rolling overhead, showed him her tear-stained face momentarily.

"Hang on to the stirrup leather, Galt," Cartwright bade.

But then, a bare twenty yards away, a gigantic roaring sheet of flame went up as the dry leaves of an oak caught and crackled, an irruption at which the frightened horse swung about, so that its quarter struck Galt and flung him down, momentarily stunned, on the track. Still Cartwright reined in.

Galt staggered up. "Get off-get away, you fool!" he shouted. "Do you want to kill all three?"

He reached the plunging, terrified horse, and with all his strength struck it an openhanded, echoing blow on its flank; at the stinging impact the animal bounded away, despite Cartwright's grip on the reins. Ben Galt staggered along after it, half blinded by the wisps of smoke sweeping across the track, panting for lack of clean air to breathe, praying aloud-

"God, don't let her be harmed—let him

save her! Don't bother about me, God—let him save her."

Terrible as an army with banners, an army with mighty banners of scarlet and gold and crimson, the forest fire marched on. The pines on Baldock's Crag still flamed, a beacon visible for miles, and in Altera they could hear the roaring, crackling advance of the destroyer, whose flaming crests lighted the streets of the town and reddened the faces of the watchers.

By the edge of the rough, where the track that had led to Swinford's house entered from the open, a little group of mounted men waited helplessly. Useless for more than one to risk entry toward that death—for they thought that Galt, marking far in beyond Swinford's, had sought refuge on some bare height—and of all these men Cartwright had more claim than any other to attempt the saving of Lal Swinford.

A plunging, lathered emerged—the flame that marched along the edge of the rough was a bare thirty yards from the entry to the track then, and the tree-tops overhead had already caught. Cartwright reined in with difficulty, and three men at once reached up to lift down Lal Swinford, her face disfigured by tears and smoke mingled, and her bare flesh showing where a falling ember had lighted on the shoulder of the cloak that covered her nightdress. Cartwright swung the horse about to face the fire again, but by that time the flame was roaring across the track, entry was impossible.

"Galt—Galt is in there," Cartwright

shouted.

"Galt?" somebody questioned, incre-

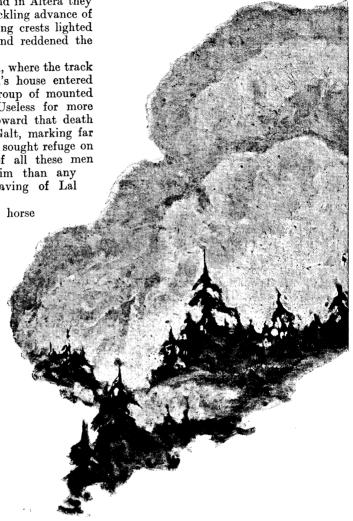
dulously.

They backed away, for the heat grew too great for them. Galloping hoofs in the gloom behind them checked, and Swinford flung himself to the ground.

"Lal—where's my Lal?" he shouted. Then he saw her, and moved toward her. But as he moved something that had little

claim to human semblance staggered out

from the rough, fifty yards or more to left of the entry to the track. It came out from sheeting flame, blackened and bent and fearful, and in the open fell prone and crawled because of the heat that rayed



across the ploughed stubble. As it came, Lal Swinford shrieked aloud and ran toward it, faster than any man there could run. In the glare they saw her lift the figure to its feet, shield it with her arms from the reaching flame, and then a half-dozen of them seized on her and the scorched, hairless being that was hardly recognisable as Ben Galt, dragging them back from the awful hunger of the flames.

"Drink—water—drink!" Galt croaked. And they gave him water.



"Lal felt herself borne up as if in a giant's hand. The steep slope slipped down behind her, and the still air grew clearer."

"He saved me," Lal explained to her father. "He would have given his life for me."

They wrapped him in a cloak and carried him in to Altera, cradling him in the arms of four men, whom other fours relieved from time to time. Lal Swinford rode beside him all the way, and as they went she told how he had saved her.

From the window of the room over Keegan's hall Ben Galt could see the bare, black stems of pines on Baldock's Crag, and the charred desolation that had once been green glory clothing the ridges of the rough. The sight was sadder for him than for any other, since he had thought the trees would

be left to him, even if Lal were unattainable.

He was still swathed in bandages, and his eyebrows and lashes were but half-grown. They told him that full half of the rough was left untouched by the fire, saved by wind and rain that came with the dawn, and he knew he would go marking again, though not this season. But the half he knew best was desolate; the silver birch that grew alone in the centre of a little glade, and that he had likened to Lal for beauty, would be mere ash when he went back to the rough, and Leggat's Ridge, whence in old time one could look across the sea of green to the corn lands, would be embers and sodden waste until with the spring green shoots of bracken would thrust through and uncurl . . .

Years hence, the forest would be again, in such beauty and strength as he had loved and known, but he would not see it. Lal's children—Lal's and John's children might see it, but he would be old, and perhaps past the desire that made an ache, keener than these burns that he had endured for her.

It was his first day out of bed, and he sat alone in an arm-chair by the window, rugwrapped and still. So gently was the door behind him opened that he did not hear it, and so careful were the footfalls across the floor that only when a board creaked did he turn-slowly, for movement was painful as vet.

Lal knelt beside him and looked up into his eyes. When, only half-consciously, he had forced his incredible way through the blazing rough, he had shielded his face with his arms, and only his forehead had been scorched. Lal gazed up into his eyes, now; . her scrutiny dropped to his hands, cased in oiled wool and bandaged to clumsy shapelessness.

"Ben," she said shakily.

"Getting better," he answered. "Good

of you to come and see me."
"I wanted to," she said. "I wanted something to tell you."

"Yes?" he asked.

"John and I-we've talked things out. You see, Ben, you saved me."

"Partly. John helped too."

"But you—you gave everything, and I— I can't be less in giving."

Ben Galt sat very still, looking out toward the charred pine trunks on Baldock's Crag. If he had looked at the girl who knelt beside him he would have seen that the hand laid on the arm of his chair was trembling. But he did not look at her.

"Won't do," he said at last. "You and John-you told me that day, when I said what I ought not to have said. You go back to John—this is just sacrificing yourself."

She leaned toward him. "Ben. don't you want me?"

He would not look at her. "So much. that I wouldn't have you like that, Lal. My sort of love—I'd have died gladly that night, with you saved. Now, when you come like this, I've got to save you again."

She leaned nearer still, and smiled. "Save me, then," she bade.

"You've only got to walk out, and you're safe—out and back to John," he said.

"Ben—I'm safer here."

He turned his head, then, and saw the light in her eyes—such light as shines in a woman's eyes for one man only-John Cartwright had never seen it, as Galt was to realise very soon. Incredulously he stared.

"Lal?" he questioned at last.

Kneeling, she leaned forward yet more, and with infinite gentleness moved his bandaged shoulders until his head lay on her breast. The shapeless mass of bandages that covered his hand reached up and drew her own head down till her lips lay on his

"Ben—it's you I want. Not sacrifice my dear---'

"Lal, darling, I know."

Thus held, he could feel the beating of her heart beneath his head, could see, too, the adoration with which her fearless gaze met his own. And, for an instant gazing out toward the blackened height of Baldock's Crag, he could see the slopes on which in a later day young pines would grow again, little, tender things like children.

Lal's children, his children. Little, tender proofs of their enduring love, straight and gracious as young pines re-clothing Baldock's Ridge in the years to come . . . "Lal . . ."

"My dear-my dear!"

HALF A CENTURY BEFORE THE **FOOTLIGHTS**

AN INTERVIEW WITH SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

WAS twelve years old when I acted for the first time. The occasion was a A Christmas performance of "Macbeth" which we children were giving at our home

in a North London suburb, in those days almost "in the country." remember how proudly I apostrophised the furniture when repeating lines during rehearsals. As the eldest son, I naturally claimed the lead. standing aside with magnifialoofness cent while the others settled the. choice of the remaining char-

Our rehearsals were carried out with a gravity which must have caused considerable amusement among elders, while the fact that several of us took two

was well received, though the visitors could not have failed to hear the loud and agonised prompting by whichever of us happened to be "off" at the time.

Next Christ-

mas nothing

would satisfy us but to give "Hamlet," and

my first recorded

that part took

lucky?) age of

was at least

before a dis-

tinguished audi-

ence, for by the

side of my

Swinburne and

from the latter I gained a laugh-

ing compliment. The first ap-

pearance in public "on the boards" took place a year

later, at the old town hall of

local company

of amateurs was

giving "The

Woodstock.

and

parents

Rossetti.

thirteen.

 \mathbf{at}

appearance

place

unlucky

Marian Lewis.

SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON.

or more parts and constantly mixed them

Merchant," and I took the part of Antonio. up did not help us. The play, however, How different from our theatrical endeavours

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at home was this occasion! No brothers or sisters to give one confidence, dressing accommodation cramped and cold, and a large, strange, expectant audience. My moustache was loose, and I made frantic efforts to speak without swallowing it whole —to the joy of some of the older actors, who, however, were very helpful and did their best to make me less nervous.

It was our friend Rossetti who, shortly after this, advised me to study oil-painting. I had inherited some talent in this direction from my mother, who was a gifted musician and artist, though she never had the opportunity to delight other than our own family with those accomplishments. Also, two of my father's closest friends were George MacDonald and John Philip, the famous R.A., so I lived in an artistic atmosphere, where my wish to paint was encouraged.

At the age of seventeen, then, I became a student at the Royal Academy, where, despite what the critics say, excellent artistic training can be and is given. It was a gay, care-free life in those days, and I met many a student whose name was afterwards to ring through the world-Frank Dicksee, now President of the Academy, Samuel Butler, famous for his opposition to the Darwinian theory, and William Wyllie among them. I had forgotten the stage did not, in fact, desire to become an actor but, alas for my dreams of art, a living had to be earned by the eldest son, and when W. G. Wills, the playwright, offered me the juvenile part at the old Princesses, in "Mary Queen of Scots," I began my real vocation with regret at leaving the jolly crowd of students who were my friends. They were loyal to the end, though, for my last view of them was of an excited crowd, wildly cheering every time I came on the stage, at the first night of the run. Wills said afterwards that never had there been so much enthusiasm.

The play, however, was not a success, and so it came about that I was cast in another production with a lady who afterwards became very famous. Even in those days Miss Ellen Terry was a determined young person, and Charles Reade, who was producing the piece, knew her talent and gave it scope. Not until the next year did the event happen from which I date my advance as an actor. I was a member of the stock company at the Princes Theatre, Manchester, which had to support the great Samuel Phelps in a presentation of the

Second part of "Henry IV," "Midsummer Night's Dream," and other plays.

I was taking my part in the rehearsal as Prince Hal, Phelps watching us from the wings, when suddenly his great voice boomed across the stage: "You know nothing about your part, young man; come to my room to-night, I want to speak to you about it."

I was horrified. I went to his dressing-room expecting terrible criticism, and found a keen, big-hearted actor whose comments were helpful and constructive, turning a spotlight on to faults I had been vaguely aware of but uncertain how to remedy.

After we had gone over the doubtful lines, he asked about my ambitions, telling me of his own beginnings, and how Macready had coached him. Macready had acted with Mrs. Siddons, who had acted with Garrick. It sounded strange to hear personal anecdotes of these great ones of the past, but in my interest I forgot my nervousness and gave a better performance that night. that, as long as he lived, Phelps helped me to become an actor with the good of the stage at heart, and to him I owe more than I can tell. He was always ready with a kindly word of criticism and advice—a magnificent representative of the old stage school! Poor fellow, he was carried from the boards he loved so well in the arms of my brother, Norman Forbes, and died a few days after.

At twenty-one I made another stage friendship, which has lasted to this day. Madge Robertson, the incomparable, now known as Dame Madge Kendal, G.O.B.E., and her husband invited me to their lovely home whenever I felt inclined to go. One day, when I had been reflecting on the obstacles and trials of my career, and begun to feel the terrible hopelessness of youth, I recall trudging drearily to their house. And there lives also a memory of my leaving it an hour afterwards with buoyant step and bounding heart, all my confidence and courage restored by their inspiring presence and kindly laughter.

From this time until I was nearly thirty my life was indeed one of hard work. As is usually the case with ambitious youth, I had periods of fierce disappointment when my goal seemed infinitely distant—a mere deceiving light—and I felt like one condemned for ever to the labours of a Hercules with the only attainment that of a brokendown and unsuccessful actor of minor parts. I had my successes, of course, as for instance when I was engaged by the Bancrofts to



[L. Caswall Smith.

SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON AS HAMLET.

play in the first production of "Diplomacy," but I was impatient, and such successes seemed pitifully small at the time.

For four years I had never a day's holiday.

For four years I had never a day's holiday. I would like those who sneer at the actor's life as one of laziness and applause to

experience what I went through then. Yet I was under the best of the managements of that time, at good theatres, and succeeding as well as could be expected. Each holiday season, in August and September, when the "lions" were away, I played at the Lyceum

and other theatres, gaining experience in difficult parts and famous plays.

In this way I came in contact with most of the well-known theatrical people of the day, and acted with many of them. Yet still it is the laughter-provoking memories



[The Daily Mirror.

AS CÆSAR IN "CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA."

that remain. I remember once, when Tom Meade was taking the part of a judge, how he forgot his lines, and when the prisoner was brought before him could not even recollect what crime he was trying! He improvised

and murmured, but still the words escaped him. At last, in desperation, he ordered the removal of the prisoner without trying him at all! The hero, whose name in the play was Paul, now felt happier, but not so the prisoner. For he, poor fellow, had only one

effective speech, and that was in his own defence! Seeing himself about to lose his chance, he muttered and struggled, but was at last borne off to the wings, breathing threats of dire vengeance. Then floated down a clear voice from the gallery, which set the whole house rocking, "Oh, Paul! Paul! wherefore persecutest thou me?"

Later in the same play I was myself looking, as heroes will, for some lost title-deeds in every place but the obvious one—a village well set in the middle of the stage. And again the wag in the gallery shouted, "Man, for Heaven's sake look in the bucket and finish the piece."

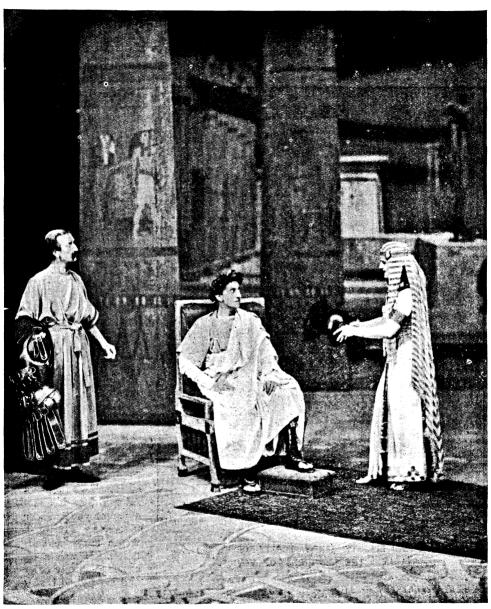
It was not only actors whom I met during this portion of my career. The fearless pioneers of pre-Raphaelite movement. Millais and Holman Hunt, were both my friends at the time when the most bitter criticism and opposition were levelled against them and their revolutionary ideas. The du Maurier family, too, I was privileged to know quite well, and I remember meeting at Hampstead Sir Gerald, then a boy, and his brother, who afterwards wrote "An Englishman's Home," and later died defending the country he had tried to warn. All through my career I have kept up my old love of painting; indeed, I sometimes wonder whether I am an artist or an actor. Many are the famous ones who have "sat" for me, too—Phelps, Miss Terry, the Kendals, Sir Henry Irving, the beautiful Modjeska, Justin Huntly M'Carthy, and others whose names are stage history to-day; and many are the memories those pictures bring back.

What man does not remember with a thrill the first occasion on which he opened a bank account? My first cheque came from Irving for a painting of the church scene from "Much Ado." I remember I

had some difficulty with the picture, and had to put it on a bigger canvas than I had originally intended, and Irving insisted on paying more for it than I had suggested.

Because of my interest in art, I became

goods. Whistler, I remember, once had the bailiffs in when he was more than usually unlucky, and objected strongly to the crude, untidy way in which the bills of sale were stuck on to the furniture. He pointed out



The Daily Mirror.

MR. IAN FORBES-ROBERTSON, SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON, AND MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOTT (LADY FORBES-ROBERTSON) IN "CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA."

acquainted with Whistler and his friend, Oscar Wilde, at a time when none of the three was too well blessed with this world's that he did not mind the bills themselves, they being a misfortune which might come to any gentleman, but he must object to them being such an eyesore. So the bailiffs, with that gravity which marks our nation, went round and stuck down the loose ends of paper, straightened bills which were askew, and put everything tidy as the great artist wished!

Somehow the incidents which stand out like sunlit hill-tops as one looks back through the mists are nearly always trivial, almost silly happenings which seemed to leave little impression at the time. One is a vivid I, sorely disappointed, was going away when I saw Irving knock at the gates, and after some parley gain admittance. Whereon I returned and fetched Peter out again, saying that I, too, required admittance, since actors evidently were taken, evidence Irving. 'Oh!' said Peter. 'He's no actor!'"

One such story went against myself. While I was playing the hero in one of Pinero's plays the author, seeing me, I

suppose, taking airs in my part, told of two girls he had heard talking on a 'bus. One said, "I think Robertson man's lovely, don't you?" and the other replied in great scorn—"'Um? W'y, I waited for 'im one night at the stage door, an' then 'e come out in a bowler, since then I ain't wanted to see no more thank actors, you!" Needless to say, the company was delighted, and it was many years before that story failed to greet me on my tours!

In 1879, when the enterprising Gatti brothers first took over "Adelphi," I was chosen to play there opposite that celebrated beauty, Miss Adelaide Neilson. I have a tragic memory of that theatre, for I was playing near by in later vears when William Terriss was stabbed to the heart at the stage door of the Adelphi by a madman, an old actor who had been dismissed by Edward Terry, whose name he had mistaken. It was a terrible shock to all my company, and we played that night

MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOTT (LADY FORBES-ROBERTSON) AS PORTIA IN "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE."

Wante actors Needl pany it was that that that that the state of the playing years was sat the Adelp old actors whose taken shock and wante actors needs and wante actors needs acto

memory of Toole telling a story to this effect: "I had an extremely strange dream last night. I thought I was dead, and had been knocking at the gates of Heaven for some time when at last St. Peter emerged. 'Can I come in?' I said. 'My name's Toole, and I was an actor down below.' But Peter said crustily, 'Can't have you here. No actors admitted,' and shut the doors. So

like automata-Heaven knows how.

Another tragedy I recall was the breach between Gilbert and Sullivan. It was not the same as murder, of course, but it seemed very sad that a stair-carpet should have lost us perhaps some of the most exquisite of light operas. For it was over a question of carpet that they quarrelled. D'Oyly Carte, their manager, suggested

having some new carpet at the Savoy and one agreed and the other demurred. Out of that tiny rift grew the chasm which divided those strange, brilliant men for the rest of their lives!

I myself had an example of the difficulty of placating W. S. in his anger. I was playing in one of his early pieces, and he, watching and criticising us, commented on my playing. With the impetuosity of youth, I made some rather clever retorts, leaving him, momentarily at least, verbally

old Haymarket into what was absolutely a model theatre. I played there on the opening night after the alterations, and when Squire Bancroft went forward, in reply to some rowdyism from the gallery, they positively shouted him down! He had altered the place for the pit, and made it in front of the gallery, and to say that the old "pittites" were annoyed would be putting it mildly. They clamoured for their pit again, for in those days audiences were very autocratic, and the play could not go



[Special Press.

THE FORBES-ROBERTSON FAMILY

in the Clan Matinêe of "Twelfth Night," in aid of the Sadler's Wells Fund, at the St. James's Theatre, 17th and 20th May, 1927.

Left to right—Back row—Mr. Ian Robertson, Miss Maxine Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Norman Forbes, Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Henry Forbes, Miss Jill Forbes-Robertson, Mr. John Kelt, and Miss Chloe Forbes-Robertson.

Front row—Miss Diana Forbes-Robertson, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Ger.rude Elliott and Mr. Philippe Forbes-Robertson.

worsted. After that we often met, but never spoke to each other again for twenty years! Then Gilbert suddenly wrote to me, suggested in his lovable way making things up, and we were happy again.

There have been many striking changes in theatre-land during my life on the stage, but none of a more revolutionary nature than when the Bancrofts transformed the on. When at last Bancroft made himself heard above the din, his voice boomed out; "You needn't listen to me if you don't like it, but listen to the play and give the company a fair chance!" The pit was so pleased with this sporting way of putting it that the company were given audience after all.

Those were great times! It is fashion-

able to-day to sneer at the Victorian era, its customs, its dignity and its influence. But what other period can compare with that age for its production of great personages? Dickens, Irving, Tennyson, Thackeray, Roberts, Gladstone, Ellen Terry, Ruskin, and many others—can the present generation show such a list? I think not!

An example of the quality of the past is recalled by an incident I witnessed from the stage of the Court Theatre while King Edward was still Prince of Wales. We

in the were midst of a play before the royal when visitor suddenly there was the roar of explosion, and most of the lights went out. All was dust and confusion, and there might well have been a panic, resulting in serious loss of life. But the Prince of Wales calmly stood up in his box in full view of the people. The theatre cheered this courageous act to the echo. for it was believed that bomb had been thrown at him. Actually, discovered later the exthat plosion was due to a leakage of the limelight gas, and hurried

to the Prince's box to apologise for the mishap. But he was not there, and was subsequently found under the stage, having lost his way in an attempt personally to investigate the cause of the explosion. When the trouble had been explained, the Prince returned to his box and saw the rest of the play.

In 1895 I began to feel that it was necessary for my progress that I should become a manager. Personally, since at that time I was very happy as an actor, I was not

anxious to take the step, but the opportunity came, and I became a partner with Mr. Frederick Harrison, who later became famous as manager of the Haymarket.

After this, jointly with my brother Ian, I took over the Lyceum from Sir Henry Irving during his American tour, and played "Hamlet" there. I was afraid the production would be too expensive for me, but Sir Henry leased me the theatre at cost price, and Horatio Bottomley offered to back me. I was frightened of the step, but

Irving and Miss Terry laughed at my fears. decided at last: then came four-page letter from Mr. G. B. Shaw, offering, under a cloak criticism, kindly advice and suggestions which really helped me greatly.

When the fateful night came at last I fatigued was strenuous with rehearsing, but thrilled at the wonderful chance that had come my way. Somehow play came to an end, passably well as I thought; but I was utterly unprepared for the congratulations which poured in next day. Most

IL. Caswall Smith.

AS THE STRANGER IN "THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK."

treasured of all was one from Sir Henry himself. I think that one of my proudest moments.

I toured Germany with Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and we played before the Emperor, who made on me at the time a favourable impression. I have seldom met a man less like one's conception of an overbearing and cruel war-lord. After this tour my brother sent me a list of leading ladies from which to engage one for my next production. On the list was the name of Miss

Gertrude Elliott, whom I had met but once, and whose acting I did not know very well. So I wrote my brother to engage someone else. But on turning over the matter Miss Elliott's face kept coming before my memory, and suddenly I wired that she was to be chosen instead. I was in a fever of uncertainty until the reply came—the wire was in time. In 1900 Miss Elliott did me the honour to become my wife.

It was not until eight years later that we first heard the late Mr. Jerome K. Jerome read over to us the manuscript of his "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," and the beauty and strength of the play inspired us to give it publicly, although in such a piece there is always a risk of heavy financial loss.

But the public appreciated that splendid work. In the United States it was a real success, and was the means of my adding to my former American friendships with such people as John Hay and Henry Adams (whom I had met when touring with Miss Mary Anderson) others like Charles Frohman, who lost his life in the *Lusitania*.

Looking back along the long road which stretches from 1853 across many stages, I am happy now that my lot was cast in the theatre. But it is not really the place we fill in life that makes us what we are. All the world is indeed a stage, and it often seems a matter of chance whether we are cast by the Great Producer to play a lead or merely a walk-on part. "The play's the thing," and our part in it, whether big or small, must be played to the top of our bent, as well as we know how, if we are to win at the end that greatest of all successes which is



[Guttenbergh, Manchester.

MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOTT IN "COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN."

called happiness. I have had my share of that, too, and am content.



[L. Caswall Smith.

AS SHYLOCK IN "THE MER-CHANT OF VENICE."

ALL TRUE

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

• ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK INSALL

HE had cabled to say that she was down at Crayport, and so he was going there as soon as the ship docked at Plymouth—to the little old house standing back from the top of Fore Street, with its garden running obliquely to the cliff top, and the sound of the sea always coming in at the windows.

She had always liked being there best of all; love of the sea was not among the things he had to teach her. He had taught her a great deal since that day, now twelve years ago, when he had found himself appointed sole preceptor, adviser and guardian of the handsome, gallant, reckless Captain Sheringham's plain, solemn little daughter. But chief of all had been the lesson he had determined she should always remember: how because of her fortune she must always be watchful of men's motives, always awake to the fact that men were mercenary and calculating and ever ready to lie for the sake of money . . . that commodity of which she, Annette Sheringham, possessed so much.

"You mean," said the Annette of those days, staring at his dark, hard face with deep, reflective eyes, "you mean that, because I am not pretty, but have so much money, anyone who wants to marry me will

really want the money?"

And Gerard North was too cynical to find anything amiss with this evidence of the success of his precepts. If her words jarred in the very least, it was simply because they expressed those precepts rather crudely; on the whole, he admired her quaintly stolid downrightness. So he had let it go at that, never losing an opportunity to drive home the truth of his convictions, which there was no one to contest—for the chaperon he found for her was either too timid or too apathetic.

When Annette came to full control of her fortune and her affairs she saw Gerard North rather less. He joined up with a scientific expedition to Central Asia, and was away two years. The expedition was unsuccessful, and a second one was planned; North had already made up his mind to accompany it when he took a dutiful review of Annette's activities. She did not need him or his advice in the least—she was having a thoroughly good time in a thoroughly sensible way: it pleased him to find her both enthusiastic and self-possessed, light-hearted and level-headed—in a word, a credit to his teaching.

And no one had succeeded in marrying

her for her money.

When he went East again, he wondered

grimly how many had tried. . . .

This time, the venture, penetrating further, occupied some months longer. North had cabled to Annette as soon as they had touched civilisation again, and Annette had cabled back . . . saying that she was going to Crayport with Mrs. Barristone.

It was February then, and he had thought she might be in London, or more likely, at the old Sheringham manor-house in Wiltshire, where three generations of Sheringhams had ridden to hounds. For it was Annette's great-grandfather who had amassed the fortune's foundation, her grandfather who had maintained it with foresight and care, and her father who, by sheer luck in his daring speculations, had trebled it.

The little house in Fore Street had been bought by Annette's grandfather, who liked to potter up and down the coast in the old yawl he kept down in Crayport harbour, and although his son raced at Cowes and the Clyde, he too enjoyed an occasional stay at the quaint little town with its forgotten harbour and green encircling hills. But neither he nor Annette had usually chosen February, since that month belonged to other pursuits.

Gerard North, going there direct on the afternoon of his arrival in England, wondered not a little what had prompted Annette's choice. He didn't imagine her to be given to whims and fancies—had anything occurred to make her forsake her

hunting in this soft grey weather that had, he learnt, succeeded weeks of frost? He found himself looking forward to his journey's end with the oddest impatience, and as his car began to bump and twist along the narrow, irregular street of the old fishing port, he was leaning forward, alert and watchful, it seemed, for the first sight of Annette.

And then he saw her come up from the jetty, a slim, grey-jerseyed figure against

the background of sea and sky.

"I meant to be back before—but we sailed round to Bell Cove—and it took longer than we thought—the morning breeze died out," she said, as they shook hands. She had given him one swift, comprehensive glance of which he had been hardly aware, and now led the way up the pebble path between its tamarisk hedges.

He said bluntly:

"I thought you would be in Wiltshire," and could perhaps have wished that her face was not turned away as she said with

a light laugh:

"I got tired of being a clockwork calendar —I can go back whenever I want to, and Meadows is keeping the horses fit. . . . have been here five days—and it has been sailing weather all the time."

North said nothing for a moment, then he demanded abruptly if the Pixie had been overhauled?

"Oh! . . . We're not using the Pixie!" Annette looked up at him suddenly, and, as if he saw her for the first time, he found himself noting the charm of the quick movement, the lovely colour the sea wind had whipped into her cheeks, the shining directness of her hazel-green eyes. . . . "We're sailing Martin's boat—the Merlin.

. . . If you come to the cliff you can see

her down in the harbour."

He followed her across the trim green plot, with its flag-staff, to the stone wall guarding the cliff edge, below which the waves fretted gently on the rocks. Away to the right you could look down on Crayport harbour, where, among the fishing craft, rode a small white yacht.

"There!" cried Annette, "that's Martin's boat. . . . Of course, you want to see her in action—like a horse—to appreciate

her properly."

"Who is 'Martin'?" asked Gerard North, rather slowly.

And Annette laughed again.

"Oh-Martin is a gipsy! He says so himself. The Merlin is a gipsy ship—he's sailed her in almost all the seas there are. I think!—He can tell you stories of so many ports-but not of ports only. When he's not aboard her, he's making all sorts of expeditions. . . ." She rested her hands on the wall and stood looking out to seato that horizon whence, presumably, "Martin" had come.

"Where did you meet him?" North, frowning slightly, was perhaps reflecting on the efficiency of Mrs. Barristone. Annette

answered at once:

"Why-in Wiltshire. He'd left the Merlin at Southampton and come up for a few days' hunting at the invitation of a man he'd met a year ago in Tangier." smiled. "I told you he was a gipsy-"

"He rides?" asked Gerard North, and he was quite unconscious of the odd note in his voice as he put this surely unnecessary question. He was remembering, with a sudden, vivid insistence, those early days of his guardianship of Captain Sheringham's daughter, whom he had often piloted across country-

"Of course. Like a—like a gipsy!" laughed Annette, turning from the wall and leading the way back towards the

house.

"Had he been to Crayport before?" North, following her, evidently found the

subject interesting.

"No. I told him about the place—and that he'd find good anchorage here," replied Annette frankly, and North for the second time wished that he could see her face.

He spent the rest of the evening at the little house in Fore Street, and Mrs. Barristone told him placidly that "Martin" was

very nice.

"He has led a very romantic life," she added, with a gentle sigh, and North looked quickly and involuntarily from her to Annette—Annette, who had been so excellent a pupil of his common sense and worldlywise training.

Annette was leaning forward in her low chair, watching the little pink and blue and orange flames flicker round the fire of driftwood logs. She wore a quaint, plain little frock of faint grey-green taffeta that was charming against the clear rosy tan of her skin, her honey-coloured hair was twisted above her ears, pale by contrast with the black lashes that hid her eyes. . . . that space of silence, broken only by the voice of the sea below the cliff and the ghost of it speaking from the hissing driftwood, Gerard North knew why he had wasted no time in coming to Crayport as soon as he landed.

Annette was-Annette.

Did she, too, find Martin "nice" and "romantic"? He wanted to ask her, but found the framing of the question impossible.

with the morning tide, and when, two hours later, North and Annette started along the coastguard path to the Point, she was tacking westwards, white against the sea and sky of that deep and lovely blue that the first days of Spring often



It was not until he was out in the soft dark of the February night, walking down the street to his quarters at the Ship Inn, that Gerard North realised that "Martin" was all the name either Annette or Mrs. Barristone had bestowed on the Merlin's owner—and they had known him a bare three weeks.

The Merlin went out at eight o'clock

bring to the south-west coast—as if for a royal background to the gold of the gorse on the cliff edge.

North, watching her, said slowly:

"You've missed your sail to-day. I suppose you've been out—most days—since you came?"

"Every day," replied Annette tranquilly, lifting her face to the sun and sea-wind. "Up the coast and down—and sometimes straight south-west. It's quite different from sailing in the old *Pixie*, you know."

Gerard North found this quite credible—remembering how the Merlin's owner was

'Martin' seems to suit him best. 'Mr. Blundell' sounds—oh! impossible," and Annette laughed gaily as she pronounced the name.

It occurred to North to wonder if "Mr. North" sounded—oh! impossible, too. He also was no stay-at-home . . . he also could



a gipsy, who had led a very romantic life, and the *Merlin* a gipsy ship of all the seas there are. . . . But he only said:

"What's the fellow's other name, Annette? You've never told me."

"Haven't I? It's Blundell. But just

talk of the ends of the earth . . . even though he was not a gipsy . . . shaping the course of his wanderings to no will but his own.

To think along these lines was a new thing to Gerard North—a new thing and a disturbing one. But up at the Point, where they seated themselves on the sunwarmed turf of the bluff green headland reaching out into the sea, he admitted the reason with characteristic directness.

For seeing the Annette of this morning, laughing in the sun and sea wind and gorse-flower scent, and remembering the Annette of last night, grave before the pictures she saw in the driftwood fire, he knew once more that for all time—Annette would be—Annette.

She was watching the flight of a gull high up above them when he spoke, abruptly.

"Are you happy, Annette?"

She turned to him, her mouth still curved into a smile, but amazement in her eyes.

"Happy?" she echoed. "Why . . . yes . . ." But she spoke almost defiantly.
"I had thought," he said, "that perhaps

"I had thought," he said, "that perhaps you had come here because you were—not. . . . In London, and down at Long Arden——"

"In London, and down at Long Arden," she interrupted him in a low, even voice, "and in Scotland-or Switzerland-or on board ship—everywhere—I have found out that what you taught me-years ago-is all true. I didn't believe you then-not, you know, because I was vain," she smiled very faintly, "I thought you were horribly cynical—and quite mistaken. . . . I found out you were-neither. It is true-every word. I'm not Annette Sheringham, pretty or plain. I'm just 'Captain Sheringham's heiress—you know—worth nearly threequarters of a million.' My horses and my frocks are—admired. And everyone is very nice to me.—I am grateful to you." voice did not change. "If you'd not-put me on guard—years ago . . . if you'd simply left me to find out that—that men are mercenary and calculating—and that and that it would be my money they'd want . . . I did find out—but at least I was a little—prepared. And now——"

"And now—you're happy?"

This time he did not look at her—so he missed the queer little smile that might—perhaps—have answered him. . . . She said quietly:

"Martin—Martin is altogether different. He doesn't care about money in that way at all. And he doesn't want to marry me. . . . I told you he was a gipsy, didn't I? . . . So, you see, when I'm with him I can be happy. There's nothing to bother about—but good sailing weather."

She rose to her feet, holding out her hand

with a light laugh to pull him to his. And Gerard North had nothing, then, to say.

That afternoon he met Martin Blundell for the first time, as the latter, having brought the *Merlin* into harbour, came ashore.

North saw a young man on quite good terms with the world, who would have passed anywhere for an amateur yachtsman of skill and enthusiasm taking a month's holiday afloat. For there was no flamboyant air of "gipsy" freedom about him—such as, unconsciously, Gerard North had been prepared to find . . . but in its place a disarming freshness of outlook that, perhaps, Annette had found a not unpleasing contrast to those maxims which she had, nevertheless, acknowledged as the truth. . . .

North, accepting his invitation to make a third aboard the *Merlin* on the following day, overlooked the ruling of that fate that is apt to make itself felt with the postman's knock.

As he drove to the junction in order to catch the first London train, Gerald North found that fate unkind . . . since it decreed that, after all, Martin and Annette should once more take the "gipsy" ship up the coast or down . . . or south-west . . . without him.

Twenty-four hours, he calculated, should see his business in town accomplished. By the evening of the second day he could be back in Crayport. And then—then he would tell Annette of that simple, tremendous discovery.

Annette was alone in the quaint lowpitched room through whose open and unshuttered windows came moonlight and the sound of the sea. She wore the little grey-green frock with a scarf around her slim shoulders, as she knelt on the deep window-seat, the soft sea-wind stirring her hair . . . and Gerard North said "Journey's end," half under his breath, and went across to her.

He came direct to the telling because it was, after all, so simple and so inevitable—and because Annette was Annette.

She heard him out—and then in the moonlight he saw that her face was white and her eyes held something of horror.

"If I married you—" She broke off with a little laugh. "Have you forgotten your—maxims? Or do they only apply to—others?"

Annette had "gone," but had left a message

assuring her that she was "perfectly all

right," and the enclosed letter addressed to himself. As he tore open the envelope,

a loose paper fluttered out. Gerard North

"I hope that you will make use of this," wrote Annette, "as it would be a pity the

expedition should not benefit just because

found himself staring at a blank cheque.

He stared at her, a slow, dull red rising in his face.

"I don't know what you mean, Annette

She turned away.

"Then—find out. I don't want to see you—ever. Do you understand?"

And she went out of the room like a little quick ghost whom mortal clumsiness has banished before he could reply.

He learnt from a servant, some twenty minutes later, that Mrs. Barristone had retired early in the evening with a headache,

and that Miss Annette had sent a message saving she could not see him again. The servant's face was impassive as North's own, but while training dictated both, in the case of Gerard North was added the force of a stunning, numbing defeat. He returned at once to his quarters at the Ship, vaguely noting that the wind was freshening

from the sea, and that each man he met prophesied "dirty weather, sir, come marning," while he felt that he did not care for all the storms that blew.

Annette had turned him down—and in terms so cruel that they echoed, all night, in his brain . . . in time with the rising wind that as yet held off from storm force.

At eight in the morning there was brought to him a wildly scribbled note signed "Kathleen Barristone," from which he learnt that I've found out the truth of what you've always taught me.

"'What's the fellow's other name, Annette? You've never told me.'"

"You see, I know that the partial failure of those two expeditions has meant that you have lost a great deal of money, also that you are most anxious the third attempt should be successful. So I shall be glad to help—in this way. If only you had told me the truth instead of asking me to marry you. . . . Martin decided last night to sail round to the South of Ireland. We

shall take the Merlin out with to-night's tide."

Even as the page of clear, firm writing thrust its meaning upon him, the wind flung a patter of spray across the quayside on to the windows of the inn; the horizon was grey and lowering, the sea whipped with caps of white. And somewhere downchannel in that dirty weather beat the "gipsy ship" with Annette aboard.

Half an hour later, a motor-boat, with Gerard North and two Crayport men, went throbbing out of the harbour in pursuit.

The Crayport men were not cheerful regarding the Merlin's possible fate on that rock-bound Atlantic coast. Their own craft was already fighting the storm, plunging like an unbroken colt in the heavy seas, while North at the wheel fought a worse despair in each memory of his own and Annette's words.

The cynical distrust which he had instilled had but, at long last, recoiled upon himself, the bitter maxims he had taught come back to mock him—with a logic he could not dispute. . . . His house of cards was tumbled by his own hand . . . and there was the echo of Annette's quiet voice: "When I am with Martin I can be happy. . . . Martin is altogether different. . . . doesn't care about money . . . and he doesn't want to marry me. . . ."

The Crayport men were no fine-weather sailors, and when at last they curtly broached the advisability of running for the nearest harbour, Gerard North knew that the situation indeed merited such a measure. Until then his whole attention had been centred on the sighting of the *Merlin*, or, as he had to admit, the likelier, more tragic evidence of the Merlin's fate. For the Crayport men had expressed it as their opinion that the yacht, sailed by anyone who did not know that coast, intimately and thoroughly, rock by rock and current by current, hadn't the ghost of a chance. . . . But-

"I'm going on," shouted North against

the storm.

And so they went on, until the motorboat's engines suddenly jerked into erratic running . . . and then ceased altogether.

Their case was hopeless from the first. They were drifting in-shore, towards a reef of rock that reached out from the foot of a Beyond that headland was low headland. the comparative shelter of a deep bay-which, as far as they were concerned, might have been a hundred miles off.

Ten minutes later the boat splintered like matchwood on the reef.

In the fishing village across the bay they will tell you an epic story of how, at long last, three men cheated the storm. How one, bruised and cut, and with a broken wrist, yet contrived, somehow, to find a way up the face of the cliff in order to bring help to his companions, crouched, one half-stunned, on the ledge of rock below.

It was at the old coastguard house on the cliff that Gerard North next saw Annette.

The Mertin, it seemed, had run before the storm, and, with many hours' start of North's pursuit, had made the shelter of the bay before dawn that morning.

"Before I read your letter," said Gerard North, with a rather mirthless smile . . . and Annette, standing very still by the shiny horsehair sofa from which he had risen at her entrance, held out her hand.

"Please—let me have that letter back." "I'm afraid I can't. The sea's got it -with my coat. But—why d'you want it . . . Annette? Since it was all true."

She came a step nearer.

"I wanted it—to destroy it—now that I know how crazy I was to write it-to think that of you.'

He said harshly:

"I might have sent you to your death, Annette," and went white as he spoke.

"You might have gone to yours—proving all you said gloriously wrong! You risked —everything to follow—us. I should have known. But, you see," her voice was very steady and very clear, "when I thought —that—of you—it seemed as if there was nothing left—that mattered. . . . had spoken of taking the Merlin round to Ireland, and—because I didn't want to think—I said I'd go too. . . . He laughed and said he'd put me ashore as soon as I was tired of it. And then the storm came, and we just got in the harbour here. . . ." She looked away from him out of the rainwashed windows. "When it's blown itself out, he'll go on . . ." she added quietly.

For a long moment he watched her in

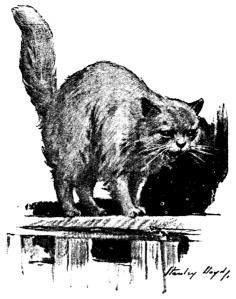
silence. Then he said:

"That morning at the Point-I asked if you were happy . . . and you said yes. . . . Annette, was that—because of—Martin?"

Annette, smiling, was beautiful.

"No. Because you'd come—safe home," she said. And at the sound of her voice and the look she gave him, he knew that all he had taught her was already unlearnt —lost knowledge in the thing that was in reality all true.





"The huge brute balanced for a moment on the top of the fence."

THE CAT THAT CAME TO STAY

• By B. L. JACOT •

T the corner where his road branched off from the suburban avenue connecting with the station Sydney Lamb crossed over to the gravelled footwalk on the far side to continue his homeward journey under the hedgerow separating Acacia Road from the open fields to the south.

"Belle View," that red-tile and stucco villa whose white-painted gate he was entitled to open and close with the feudal finality of a landed proprietor, lay back among the young trees on the other side of the road. Yet each evening this house-holder, returning from the City, made this slight detour. Approached from its own side of the road, the detached residence that flaunted his life's savings presented but an end-on vista of neatly trimmed box hedging. From the southern flank a three-quarter aspect, embracing red roof and first-floor

windows, opened itself to merge imperceptibly into a full-face greeting when the neversurfeiting moment arrived to pull up directly opposite that gate.

A neat, fragile-looking man, with hands and feet that had been wasted on one of his sex, and eyes mild and steady as those of a young nun, Mr. Sydney Lamb, of the Contracts Department, S. and A. Assurance Company, looked to his evening stroll up from the station as one of his few pleasures in life. It cost him nothing in a world where money was always short. It gave him fifteen precious minutes to himself, where there was no one to override him in conversation, forcing out the reluctant participation which he was far too timid to refuse. It brought him evanescent peace wherein he could call his soul his own. And, finally, it gave him, as on a stage, his house in all its suburban glory, solid as the British Constitution against the splendours of a setting sun.

From the footwalk under the hedgerow that evening he paused longer than was his wont. The sun had beaten him. Walking up the hill he had watched it, a great red penny balanced on the rim of the horizon lining the undulating ridge of the Surrey hills. It had slipped down behind when he arrived in front of the house, but the long crimson trailers still spread fanwise in its wake, silhouetting his western chimney-pot against a dull blaze of fire.

Once, as he stood and watched, his breath coming and going silently, almost imperceptibly, he thought he caught a glimpse of Mrs. Lamb at a bedroom window, and with a guilty start he stepped out to cross the road. A second wary glance, however, showed the maid, and he stopped in his tracks to enjoy another moment or two of freedom from the domestic autocracy which somehow had enslaved him in the course of those long years since the care-free days of his early married life.

There was something about the setting of the sun which roused his five-foot-seven of meagre manhood into a faint-hearted rebellion against the way Life had laughed at the heroic aspirations of his earlier days. Pirates, bloodshed, revolvers, madly daring acts of gallantry on the High Seas—that was the stuff he had fed his youthful ambition on, and it had taken the insidious discouragement of upwards of a score of the passing years to convince him finally of the futility of it all. There are no revolvers about life insurance, and acts of gallantry, however restrained, are apt to be misconstrued in a busy City office.

He removed his soft felt hat, and absently stroked at the streaks of grey about his narrow temples. *Requiem*—for the hundredth time—in the form of a half-conscious sigh, escaped him, and he made his way slowly across to the white gates.

It was as he stretched out his hand for the catch that he became aware of an intruder in the clipped box-hedge. The wall of green shivered under the press of an unseen influence; there came a frenzied scrape against the inside of the deal boundary wall, and, even as he withdrew his arm sharply with a nervous jerk, the head and paws of a strange cat appeared over the ledge.

For a moment the animal eyed him distrustfully. An enormous brute with a flaming ginger head the size of a young spring

cabbage. The almond eyes were clear as amber, and bottomless as a lake, and the fore paws, with their needle claws extended, were as broad as half-crown pieces.

"Shoo! Shoo!" Sydney began mildly. Commands, even to animals, had a habit of turning to absurdities on his lips, and the suddenness of it had upset him.

But the cat only stared him down. The amber eyes were impassive—a hundred miles away, beyond the owner of the front garden. Drawing up his back legs with the uncanny silence that goes with feline grace, the huge brute balanced for a moment on the top of the fence, then dropped, effortless, on to the footwalk at the man's side.

"Shoo-shoo-shoo!" Sydney tried again, backing carefully away from the ominous bulk. But the effect was equally unavailing. Squatting on his haunches, the cat turned its attention to a leisurely toilet of the hind paws.

In the ordinary way the indignant house-holder would have passed in to make his belated evening greeting to the lady whose word was more than law. But something about the cat—its unusual size, its vivid colouring, its entire disregard of the word of command, its uncanny eyes, perhaps—something about the animal made him pause and wonder.

A magnificent brute: superman among cats. As he watched it licking, tugging a red tongue over the upturned velvet of a paw, an acknowledgment of hopeless inferiority stole on him. Sydney Lamb knew the dumb heart-stir of that feeling. A legacy of his youth—of the days when he used to journey out to Twickenham to see giants doing battle in the mud. It caught him still, sometimes: when he read of Dempsey and Tunney, of mad flights over the wastes of the Atlantic. . . .

In the back of his mind, too, there made itself conscious that longing he had always had to possess an animal all to himself. A dog—a cat—a bird, even. But Constance kept her home far too spotless to allow of that faithful-dumb-friend complex developing into anything more than a mere complex, and that a suppressed one.

As a Parthian shot, he gave the animal a further "shoo!" as he opened the gate. A look of mild surprise crept into the creature's eyes. It stopped its licking and strolled over to the man's boots. A sniff round the heel and an inch or so up the trouser leg, and the tail rose like a flaming mast in the stern. Sydney moved further away, but the

cat followed, rubbing its ginger pelt against

 $_{
m his}$ $_{
m legs}$.

He jumped through the gate and closed it firmly behind him, but the animal took it at a bound. The merest touch on the top, and it dropped silent as a dead leaf on to the gravel at his side. It was purring now: a throb mellow as a distant drum, ingratiating as the subtlest flattery, warm as the fireside rug.

"Puss, puss," he offered warily, at length. It intrigued him to think that such a fine animal should trouble itself to take notice of him. Bus-conductors, ticket-collectors, office-boys habitually ignored the little man, with the sure instinct that brings men of blood and iron to the top of the tree. With Sydney Lamb the affair had long since extended to most animals. There were not many dogs in the neighbourhood who thought it worth while even to bite him. This cat—this magnificent prize-fighter among cats—was an epoch-making exception. He bent over warily to stroke its head.

The cat yawned, disclosing a gaping row of fangs, and moved unconcernedly away.

"Come here!" he found himself ordering.
"Come here. I want to stroke you. Puss,
puss!"

For a moment the animal hesitated, then, to the unbounded astonishment of the man squatting on his heels on the gravel, it turned and marched obediently back to his side. For one wild moment Sydney strove to control his elation, then:

"Go away again!" he commanded sternly in a voice that made him look round ner-

vously over his shoulder.

From the depths of those amber eyes, the cat eyed him coldly for a moment, then lowering the colours flaunted in that mast-like tail, it turned sadly away.

"Come here! Here, I say," he snapped, and this time the animal turned on the command without hesitation and trotted

back to his side.

Levering himself to his feet, he wiped his brow. There was no doubt about it. This international Rugby footballer among cats had met its better. It came: it went. And Sydney Lamb was the man who ruled its Destiny! This was the stuff his dreams were made of! He fixed the cat sternly with his eye for a disciplinary moment, then turned on his heel with a wheel little short of Napoleonic. Never once did he turn to see if his slave was following. He knew it.

Just when he decided that the cat must

be his, he was never quite sure. He was only certain that it must be. It was not until he was actually inside his own hall, with the giant purring round his legs, that the terror-striking thought of what Constance would have to say occurred to him. It came as a crisis, an acid test.

The cat, of course, would have to go before his wife saw that he had brought it into the house. Push it out? Command it? If he said "Outside!" the giant creature would obey him. . . . But—there was the touch of that superman among felines at that very moment, offered in adoration, in fear and trembling, at his feet. An impulse stronger than himself galloped away with him.

"Constance!" he bawled, in a voice that brought, in spite of that fateful impulse, unconquerable shivers of apprehension running down his spine. "Constance!"

His wife appeared from the sitting-room on the left. It was clear that she was badly startled.

"What's that cat doing in my house?" she demanded after a pause to recover her breath. "And what were you doing shouting all over the house like that?"

The cat arched its back to spit tripleessence of fury at the mistress of the house, and it was this defiance which turned the scales wavering in the coward mind of its new master.

"I am not shouting all over the house," rejoined Sydney seriously. "Only in one place. But that is neither here nor there. This cat is mine. I'm going to keep it, Constance."

"You couldn't be drunk at this hour," put in Mrs. Lamb, after an amazed interval.

Sydney inclined his head. He was a teetotaler.

"You couldn't be insane. . . ."

"But I could and can, and shall keep this cat," persisted her husband, amazed, too, at the sound of his own voice.

For a long moment Constance eyed him, much as if he had been a caterpillar in the salad.

"Very well," she said, and closed the door of the sitting-room behind her far too quietly.

The evening meal that night was a sore trial of nerve to the mild, but no longer insignificant, little man. In the brief interval before the Chinese gong sounded from the hall below, he brushed up the animal's coat in his bedroom, balancing him—he was a tom-cat, of course—on the corner of his mantelpiece and caressing the luxury of his

pelt, with an old hair brush. He shone like satin, and it was perhaps the similarity in the words that made his master christen him, on the inspiration of the moment, "Satan." The cat represented all that was dark and mysterious, hitherto unthought of, in Sydney's life; all that suggested power,

lived with them year in and year out in the thin guise of amateur housekeeper; and once Sydney really thought that the animal was going to eat Beatrice, the maid, as she foolhardily ignored his regal signs of displeasure in her presence round his side of the table. And yet—yet, this monarch among cats,



unrelenting ferocity, that magnificent detachment from the puny comings and goings of this vulgar world. That hall-mark of the super-mind! Satan, he thought, was a good name.

Satan sat by his chair as he dined. He spat again at Constance; he arched his lordly back at Hetty, the sister-in-law who

at a careless downward thrust of his fingers, brought a chirrup of joy out through his fangs and rose on tiptoe to press his gleaming pelt against the hand that was his master.

Amazing! But that was nothing by the side of his attitude to Constance and her elder sister. It was wilder than his wildest dreams, and like a dream it all came so

easily to him. He had only to think of the adoration of that master cat and the rest of the world shrank into insignificance.

Throughout the earlier part of the meal, he was conscious that the women had been in conference. There were the stony silence, the sly furtive glances, the way they stared at him whenever he chanced to be looking away. Once Hetty began a remark about Satan, but she dropped it at a glance, smothering it in a silence that dropped over it like an avalanche. Most of the difficulty in the family came from Hetty. Years older than Constance, she sought to justify her existence at "Belle View" in a loosely defined domestic character. But as Constance did all the shopping, superintended the housework, and managed such of the cooking as could not be entrusted to the maid-ofall-work, Sydney could never quite see where her usefulness came in. Not that he ever dared to ask. The woman terrified himthat is, she used to. . . .

But for one solitary remark, the meal continued and ended in silence. He loitered over his courses to his heart's content; he made a point of drinking with his food, a habit that never failed to rouse the dyspeptic Hetty to bitter comment; he rolled the soft of his bread up into minute balls and played football with them over the cloth at his side, dribbling with his fingers, and scoring goals between his tumbler and the vase in the centre of the table; but to crown it all something perverse but insistent within him urged him to comment on the food.

"These fritters," he said, casually turning one over on the plate before him. "Pity to waste oranges. Mine is scarcely warmed through." He joined the handle of his spoon to the silvered shank of his fork and pushed the plate a highly significant inch and a half further from him.

From the other end of the table came a quick intake of breath. A trenchant pause. But nothing else.

It was not fair. Constance was a superb cook. Under the goad of her elderly and dyspeptic sister she could be acid in manner to the man she took pains to feed well, but—he had admitted it often—her domineering tongue was the only thing he regretted in her. Besides, the fritters were as perfect and succulent as ever. It tore him to leave them untouched on the plate, but in the intoxicating flush of his new confidence he was sober enough to realise the immense importance of the issue at stake.

The thrust, however, drew no answer, and

he was left with a highly satisfactory but negative victory.

Next morning he was up early. Satan had slept in a basket at the foot of his bed, and something of the indulgent tyrant in Sydney made him eager to do the proper thing by his slave. For half an hour he walked the cat round the gardens, back and front, showing him the estate. The house and the cat were the two things which meant most to him, and in some nebulous way he considered that they ought to meet and get acquainted. He was proud to show the house and its grounds to that monarch of cats, but he was, perhaps, prouder still to have Satan stepping elegantly at his heels as he wandered about his gravelled paths.

At the French windows of the dining-room Hetty stopped him.

"About this nonsense of that cat," she began, a shade too hurriedly. "I'm not going to stand by and see dear Constance bullied like this. Either that brute goes, or I do." She finished with a rush and stood facing him, more confident now, with her lean hands on her bony hips.

Sydney straightened himself leisurely from bending over the ginger monster at his feet.

"Satan is not going," he told her quietly. "Whether you go or stay is your own affair. I shan't try to stop you, I can assure you." He turned away to continue his stroll round by the kitchen and the back of the garage.

From her bedroom window Constance watched him as he disappeared down the road on his way to the station. There was the faintest hint of a swagger in his stride—reminiscent somehow of the old days when he used to call for her at her father's house. He had always been fond of animals then.

. . . But this cat! It was an outrage—

not Satan himself, but the bringing of him to her house. Hetty said that she was the only woman she knew who would have stood it—for a moment. And she had stood it for a whole night. Satan was locked up in his master's bedroom now, to keep him safe from following his master to the station. . . .

There was a new tilt to that old felt hat, too, she found herself deciding, long after her spouse had passed out of sight. Just a shade of difference in the way he wore it, perhaps. That reminded her of the old days, too. . . .

"Have you got the key to that room?"

asked a voice at her elbow.

She jumped round almost guiltily. The sight of her sister at her side brought her back to the outrage of the moment.



"Either that brute goes, or I do."

"To Sydney's bedroom? Yes, of course. He gave it to me. The room has to be tidied."

"If you'll give it to me I'll deal with that cat."

Constance hesitated, ignoring for the moment the other's outstretched hand.

"Well," she began. "Don't you think we'd better wait until he comes back? I mean—"

"Give me the key," repeated the older woman firmly. "If you're too squeamish, now——"

"I'm not being squeamish," Constance protested weakly. "What—what are you

going to do?"

"Never you mind. I'll teach him to fill the house with stray cats! What'll he try to be doing next, I wonder!"

For a moment the younger woman wavered, but she handed over the key. Anyone who hesitated with this dyspeptic spinster was lost.

During the long years of residence at "Belle View" Sydney had come to estimate his paces on that morning walk to the station within millimetre limits. Practice had made him perfect; there was not a hazard on the route that could make him waste half a minute on the station in unnecessary waiting, or exert himself a step more than the occasion demanded through cutting it too fine. Yet that morning—the first time ever—he missed his train.

In the early days he could distantly recall having to hurry on one or two occasions. Once, even, he had to cover the last thirty yards in a run. But to miss the train absolutely, magnificently, unquestionably—it was undreamt of! Although he was unaware of it, it was that swagger, risen from the ashes, and that cock to the brim of his hat that had done it. But it did not worry him. When he arrived on the station there was not even a view of the back of the guard's van in the distance. Instead of finding himself prostrate with horror, he discovered that the tragedy did not appear to concern him in the least.

He weighed himself on the penny-in-theslot machine and stamped out his name on an aluminium slip at a neighbouring apparatus, and, whistling through his teeth, caught the 10.7 when it arrived—the City

magnates' train.

The 9.14 had its third-class carriages full and its first empty. With the 10.7 the process was reversed. That was the difference of those fifty odd minutes. Sydney found himself travelling with the men who lived on dividends and directors' fees—a nerveshattering experience in the ordinary way, but it seemed nothing to him as he gazed inconsequently out of the window of his carriage.

On the inside of the door of "Contracts," Thompson, a junior with a mere ten years of Assurance to his credit, stopped him.

"My word, Lamb!" he exclaimed. "You should see the mess they're in in your department! Can't get started. I've never known you late before——"

"I don't suppose you have," replied the little man sharply. "I never have been. What's the matter? The chief's there, isn't he?"

The junior grinned.

"Old Bordass?" he inquired facetiously.

"He can't do a thing. He doesn't even know where the keys are—or what the filed cross-refs. mean! Work can't start. Your system of duplicate tracing—why, I've been at it myself—me on my own job!—and I can't get a move on. Where do I——"

"Have—have I been asked for, then?" Sydney asked, with a trace of the old nervousness.

"Asked for! The whole building's been looking for you!"

The younger man laughed, but Sydney did not stop to listen. The mahogany desks of "Contracts" were adrift with confusion. Bordass, his chief with an Oxford accent and a genius for taking credit for the work of others, was lost. Queries and demands bounced off him like india-rubber. The department was already an hour lagging, and every minute took this unit further out of synchronisation with the other parts of the machine.

As Sydney appeared, slightly flushed, in the midst of it all, a dozen voices greeted him simultaneously with a hundred technical questions. But he paid no attention to them. His eye was riveted on a sombre figure in the background, a tall, sallow man who had arrived on the scene, unobserved, some few minutes before. That flustered hen Bordass had not seen him.

"Sir Clement!" Sydney breathed to himself, and wondered how much the Scotch baronet who was managing director had seen and heard.

The £5,000-a-year Scot beckoned to the little man who was late for his work, and Sydney followed him out of the long glasslined room.

Inside the inviolable sanctuary of the directors' room, Sydney sank, in answer to a wave of the hand, into an easy chair facing the desk. "You should be terrified," he was telling himself. "It's Sir Clement! And you were late for your job! You're in his private room. He saw that you were late. He saw the confusion—the mess-up through your missing your train. You're

for it, now! What about the mortgage on 'Belle View'?"

Instead of trembling, he found himself with an easy smile on his lips. He returned the director's keen gaze on level terms.

"You were late, this morning, Lamb?"
"Missed my train," the subordinate answered easily, but not disrespectfully.
"The first time I've been more than five minutes out of time for twenty-six years.
The first time——"

The Scot on the other side of the desk inclined his head in silence. His eyes seemed to be searching for something in the other's face. There was not a wrinkle overlooked.

"Tell me, Lamb," he put in at length. "Is your department always in a mess like

that when you're away?"

"It isn't my department," Sydney put in with a quick confidence that amazed him, and the other nodded in acknowledgment of the point. The director was speaking with him on equal terms—nodding his head in approval, with both of them leaning back in their chairs!

"Besides," he went on, "I've never been away from it before except for holidays each year. And then I've been able to arrange for things to run smoothly over the fortnight I'm away."

For a long while, it seemed to the subordinate lounging in the easy chair, the mainspring of S. and A. Assurance continued to look over him. There was a kindly wrinkle to his eyes. But they were puzzled too.

"How old are ye, Lamb?" he asked sud-

denly.

"I'm forty-four years old, sir," Sydney told him.

"A Scot?"

He shook his head.

"It's a pity," mused Sir Clement. "How long have you been with 'Contracts'?"

"Nine years with Contracts, 26 in all with S. & A.——"

"Ah, well," the man behind the desk commented absently. He rose abruptly to his feet. "That'll be all, Lamb. I think you'll be having a change soon. But I shouldn't make a habit of being late. A man like

you is far too valuable."

As Sydney reached the door of the sanc-

tum, the older man stopped him.

"Perhaps I'd better be walking back with you," he said with a thin-lipped smile. "Maybe it'll make them think a wee bit more about my having interviewed you than they'd be thinking as it is."

Inside the glass-lined department of "Con-

tracts" once more, he laid his hand on the younger man's shoulder. "Let's see what you can make of this now, Lamb," he said in a voice that was meant to, and did, carry. His wave of the arm embraced the room from the red face of Bordass to the litter of papers.

Sydney's head rose a centimetre or so on

his shoulders.

Sydney Lamb did not linger that night on his pitch facing the red roof and the upper windows at the end of his walk up from the station. Satan, the wonder-cat, was waiting for him up in his bedroom, and after the day's happenings in "Contracts" he felt less of an impostor about receiving tribute from him. The cat was right. That conviction was growing on him. He was a man to be considered: a man of "pep" and "punch"—a "go-getter," as they called it in the American magazines. The only thought that troubled him was one which centred round the puzzle as to why he had never realised it before.

In the hall he caught a glimpse of Hetty disappearing through a door. The smile—a sly, sneaking sort of grin—she gave him made him wonder inconsequently what it was all about. When he opened his door with the key that the maid handed to him, he knew.

For a desperate five minutes he hunted and searched, but from the first he knew it was hopeless.

Satan was gone. Satan the prize-fighter among felines, who had looked on him and found the stuff to build up adoration. A bulwark against the contempt of the rest of the world had gone with him too. From that first desperate moment of realisation, his confidence evaporated, steadily and surely. If only the cat had been there to support him—a single peg on which to hang his self-respect—he would have had the courage to accost Hetty. He knew she had done it. That smile was enough in itself. But now, with the ginger tiger gone . . .

Sneaking out of the house by the back stairs, he lost himself in the gardens. He dared not risk meeting Constance yet, and he knew what to expect from the spinster when she realised that he had fallen back on the miserable ways of his former shrinking self. In his mind there was a vague idea to learn of Satan's fate by trickery and stealth, and to recover him before his shame was known. As he trod softly among the currant bushes and glass frames at the end

of the garden his heart was full of bitterness. "Why couldn't they have left me my cat?" he moaned weakly to himself. Then: "It wasn't Constance. She would never have done it. It was Hetty. She took my cat!"

A shade of the man who had lost his train that morning, he was on the verge of tears. The mere thought of Sir Clement now made him tremble. To think that he had lounged in his arm-chair that morning and nodded with him, talked at him! Treated the great man for all the world as if he were an acquaintance on the top of a bus! It made his palms clammy to think of it. After that impertinence he would never be able to meet the great man's eye again.

A voice hailed him through the trees. was useless to duck. He awaited the coming of his sister-in-law like a bird fascinated

by a snake.
"I want a word with you, Sydney," the woman began grimly, after one satisfactory glance at his shrinking form. "I've not yet had your explanation about that cat you brought home with you last night.

"Well, I——"he began weakly. "I—saw it in the drive. It followed me in . . . you see." He broke off hurriedly to dab at the

grey streaks on his temples.

"Followed you in!" the woman laughed mechanically. "Nonsense! But only what we might expect. The animal is safe now," she went on, enjoying every word. "I took him this morning to the Police Station. They tell me he'll be destroyed in three days if he's not claimed."

His eyes wandered to the lean wrists hanging over the skirt opposite him. A keen thrill of satisfaction took him at the sight of bandages just over the right hand. Satan had done his best. He edged away towards the path leading round the bottom of the garden in between the rhododendrons and the wooden fencing.

"I've never heard of anything so ridiculous," the voice followed him. "Followed you up the drive! A schoolboy could do better than that. Well, I promised Constance I'd see you about it, and I have. But don't think that you've heard the last

of-

At this point Sydney's ears ceased to register the sounds of this female voice. scrape on the fencing was followed by a soft pad on the level with his ear. A ginger red streak poised for a moment light as a feather on the top of the fence, then dropped silent as a falling leaf at his feet.

At the sight of his super-cat, the little man's heart beat up into his throat in a rattle of a thousand tiny hammers.

"Satan!" he breathed, and gathered up the pelt to his cheeks as if he were frightened that at any moment the cat might disappear as suddenly as he had come.

Then, setting the cat down, he burst through the bushes like a shot fired from a

"Hi, you!" he thundered at the figure turning back over the lawn, and in a moment he was at her side. "What the devil do you mean: 'A schoolboy could do better'?

The woman spun round on her heel. Her jaw dropped as she scanned the angry flush on his cheeks.

"What do you mean by it? What do you mean—eh?" he was repeating aimlessly

at the top of his voice.

"I—I don't know," the other faltered. "I-I . . ." Gathering her ample, skirts she buckled before the raking fire of his eyes and legged it instinctively for the French

Like a flash Sydney was after her. blood was up, and now that confidence had come back to him with his cat, it drowned him in its flood. He was Mussolini and Napoleon in one . . . with a mildly interested tom-cat cantering, tail erect, at his

"You were talking this morning about going," he yelled after the streaming figure as it ran. "Why don't you go? I've had enough of you upsetting our life here. And what the devil do you mean: 'A schoolboy could do better '?"

There was more of it, delivered through the key-hole of his sister-in-law's bedroom, but there came no reply from the shaken woman within.

From her bedroom window, Constance had witnessed the flight. The sight of that sister who ruled her with a rod of iron flying before—Sydney, brought a gasp of amazement, to be followed immediately by a swift and inexplicable glow of admiration. episode fitted in somehow with the hint of a swagger—that tilt to the hat. Nevertheless, when sounds of the chase indicated its progress to the stairs, she hastened to lock the door of her room.

A vague but overpowering fear swept over her. What was he going to do next? When he had finished with her sister, what then? She collapsed weakly on the bed, but not for an age of humdrum married bliss would she have foregone the thrill of that sharp stab of virgin fear.

But the elemental man outside on the landing was rattling at the knob of her door.

"Constance!" he barked. "What's the matter with you all? Open this door at once!"

Quaking deliciously with the apprehension of violence, she turned the key in the lock and stood back to await him.

"Your sister," he announced tersely but noisily, "is leaving this house to-night. Now! She's going for good. See?"

She nodded dumbly.

"And the cat is stopping. See that,

She nodded again, wide-eyed and palpitating. This cave-man was overheated, dis-

hevelled, soiled with rhododendron mould. But his eyes blazed and his chin jutted dangerously. For an age-long moment her eyes clung to those of her husband, lost in the throes of a new-found servitude. Then:

"Darling!" she breathed. And with an impulsive swoop she flung her arms round his neck.

For a round dozen of cannon-shot heartbeats, Sydney suffered the adoration of a weak woman, courteously, as a strong man should. Then, for the first time in his life, he untwined a woman's arms from round his neck.

"I'm going out now," he announced gruffly, "to call a cab for your sister. . . . Come along, Satan."

AUTUMN VILLANELLE.

THE orchard-boughs once more are bare,
And faintly from the fruit-barn's walls
The apple-harvest scents the air.

A rabbit scampers to his lair,

A last thrush from the hedgerow calls—
The orchard-boughs once more are bare.

So long ago, when May was fair,
You whispered: "Wait! till Autumn falls,
And apple-harvest scents the air.

"Mayhap you will no longer care
When the bright harvest-moon enthrals
And orchard-boughs once more are bare."

Now ends my summer-long despair.

The full moon treads her silver halls,
And apple-harvest scents the air.

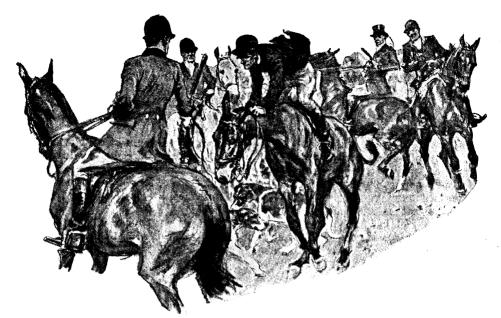
I kiss the moonlight on your hair,

The gleam that on your forehead falls.

The orchard-boughs once more are bare,

And apple-harvest scents the air.

W. LESLIE NICHOLLS.



"Denis McGinty galloped right into the middle of the Meet. His mount seemed to know that he was expected to stop there, for he did so with a suddenness that almost threw his rider over his head."

McGINTY'S REVENGE

• By G. H. POWELL •

"B AD scran to their ould regulations," said Denis McGinty, as he read the letter in his hand.

"What is it they say?" asked his wife.
The letter in question was from the secretary of the local Hunt, and in reply to McGinty's demand for compensation for the alleged killing of pure-bred poultry by a fox.

"They say that we don't lock up the hins at nights, and that it's puttin' temptation in the way of the fox," replied her husband, giving his own translation of the letter. Then he continued, "They says that the birds isn't worth anythin', and that they're ould ones."

"There's not one of thim hins more than five year old," responded his wife angrily.

"Shure, didn't I tell him that?" said McGinty testily.

"Will you be puttin' the lawyer on to thim?" inquired Mrs. McGinty eagerly.

"What the divil's the use of doin' that?" said her husband. "Don't you know that the ould fox isn't theirs and that it does be wanderin' all over the country?"

"Then why did they pay the Murtaghs

for the hins he took?"

"Shure, how am I to know why they pays one and not another?" asked McGinty in perplexity.

"What are you goin' to do about it, Dinis?" asked Mrs. McGinty, who looked

to her fowls for pin-money.

"I dunno," said her husband shortly.

"I might see Mr. Knight meself."

"Shure, he'll only talk you round just like he did before. Wasn't that why you wrote this time?" said his wife sagely.

"It was," agreed McGinty, who had been

no match for the Hunt secretary when that individual had appealed to his sporting instincts.

"Maybe it's shootin' it, you'd be?" suggested his wife, speaking in a low tone as if she feared that the walls had ears.

"Is it shootin' a fox?" exclaimed Mc-Ginty, in genuine horror. He was always ready to abuse the animal in question, but the sporting blood in his middle-class veins forbade any injury to its person with a lethal weapon.

"Yis," continued Mrs. McGinty, in a coaxing voice. "Shure, nobody would know, and you could skin the baste, and it's a lovely fur it would make. It could be dyed and made up in Dublin, and nobody

would know anythin'."

McGinty stared at her in horror for a few moments, and then he spoke in tones of reproof. "A McGinty has niver shot a fox," he said.

"Then it's talkin' with Mr. Knight again, you'll be?" said his wife in a voice of

resignation.

"That I will," said her husband, drawing himself up to the full height of his five feet six inches. "It's makin' thim pay, I'll be."

He put on his hat and coat, and went off to pay another visit to Mr. Knight, and it was several hours before a rather crestfallen McGinty again crossed the threshold of his house.

"Well?" demanded his wife, who had already read the result of his interview on his face.

"It's no use," he said despairingly.

"Why?" she asked sharply.

"Shure, didn't he say that he'd got thim hins opened up by the vet, and didn't the vet say that they hadn't laid e'er an egg for many a year?" answered her husband.

"And what does the vet know about hins?" snorted Mrs. McGinty wrathfully.

"Shure, isn't it his job?"

"Did you ever get a vet for a hin?"

"Shure, it's not worth it."

"That's just it," said Mrs. McGinty emphatically. "It isn't worth the vet's time learnin' about hins, and he doesn't."

"But he knew about thim not layin' for

years," objected McGinty.

"He said he did," answered his wife.
"Can't he say anythin' that suits him?"

"I didn't think of that."

"Of course you didn't, and I suppose you shut up when Mr. Knight told you it?"

"What was I to say to him?"

"That the vet didn't know anythin' about nins."

"He wouldn't have believed me."

"And he won't pay?" said Mrs. McGinty, coming back to the real question.

"He says that even if thim hins was worth anythin' he wouldn't pay as we lets thim roost in the trees," replied her husband.

"And what right has he to say where we lets the hins roost?" demanded Mrs.

McGinty angrily.

The question of any rights claimed by the Hunt roused Denis McGinty, who had not looked on the matter quite in this light before. When he had been a tenant farmer he had abrogated rights unto himself that were certainly not legal, and, at one time, he would have thought much less of having a shot at a landlord than at a fox. Now, under the legislation of a kindly Government, he, along with other Irish farmers, was on the way to be the absolute owner of his farm, and the question of rights had a new meaning.

He was now a landowner, although it would be a matter of some twenty years before his instalments to the Government ceased, and, as such, he was in a position to prevent the Hunt using his land. This was quite different from his former position as a tenant. He had soon realised it when, after the purchase of his land, he had sent a claim for a broken gate to his erstwhile landlord, who had politely explained the new situation, and had referred him to the Hunt for compensation.

McGinty had promptly applied to that body and had come face to face with the hard fact that he had to fight his own battles. Whether it was the carelessness of McGinty, or of the Hunt, that had caused any damage previously, it had always been repaired by Colonel Dalton without question, so far as his tenant was concerned. Now the Hunt called for evidence that their followers had done the mischief, and it nettled the new landowner, besides taking some hard swearing, since it was one of his own carts that had done most of the damage in this particular case. Colonel Dalton had always accepted his word, and he could not understand why the Hunt did not. McGinty had never been good with his pen, so he had usually interviewed the courteous secretary and had, hitherto, been vanquished by the seemingly infallible arguments of the other.

In his home his wife's argument that the fox, and in fact the whole Hunt, was a nuisance, seemed to be convincing, but a few

minutes' talk with the secretary appeared to break up all the arguments used by Mrs. McGinty. He was, indeed, in a state of perplexity, but, in this case, his wife had the last word, and it proved to be one of importance.

Being an Irishwoman, she was naturally resourceful, for she had spent the greater part of her life struggling to "make things do," and her fertile brain conceived a plot suitable to this particular occasion.

"It's gettin' even wid thim, you'll have to

be," she said firmly.

"Gettin' even wid thim?" echoed her husband.

"It is. It's value for the hins that the fox took that you want."

"But I've told you that they won't pay,"

said the man irritably.

"Gettin' value isn't all payin'," said the woman, shaking her head wisely. "There's other ways."

"What other ways?"

McGinty listened in silence while his wife unfolded her plan, and a broad grin spread over his dull-looking countenance.

"Shure, it's the most elegant thing I ever heard," he said admiringly. Then he added apprehensively, "What will the Colonel think of it?"

For generations the McGintys had been tenants of the Daltons, and he had not yet

lost his respect for that family.

"The Colonel's got nothin' to do wid you now," said his wife insistingly. "You're your own master and can do anythin' you like."

McGinty was wrinkling his forehead, and gave no reply. He knew that what his wife had spoken was quite true, but he could not bring himself to do anything that he thought would cause annoyance to this man, whom he regarded with the utmost respect.

Mrs. McGinty, with all the domineering power possessed by a small woman, began to press home her advantage. "You've a perfect right, Dinis," she urged. "And shure, it's a perfect baste it'll make for the cart afterwards, and don't you want one now that old Bob's dead?"

"Maybe it's kickin' the cart to pieces it'll be," suggested her husband.

"A kickin' strap'll stop that," said the

practical woman.

At length she prevailed, and before the week was out a strange-looking, wickedeyed beast, some fifteen hands high, was delivered at McGinty's farm, and safely housed where formerly a bull used to dwell. Mrs. McGinty had accompanied her husband on the expedition to purchase the mule, and they had bought an animal cast from the Army. As a rule, an Army-cast mule is not a very valuable one, but this particular beast had a well-groomed coat and was in magnificent condition. Moreover, it appeared to be a comparatively young animal. McGinty, left to himself, would never have purchased it, but his wife was enthusiastic about it, and insisted upon conducting the bidding herself. She had not very far to go, however, and, to her delight, she secured the mule at a figure that seemed to be considerably below its real value.

The auctioneer did not consider that it was his business to inform her that the price had been regulated by the mule's conduct when a prospective buyer had tried to have a look at its teeth shortly before her arrival. The gentleman, however, was not among the bidders, for at the moment he was being driven home by a friend, as he was incapable of performing that office for himself.

There was no Meet adjacent to the Mc-Gintys' farm for nearly a fortnight, and during that time Irish resource, combined perhaps with some treatment that an inspector of the society which looks after the welfare of animals might not approve, had reduced the mule to what was a sort of a rideable condition. The new owners had never dealt with a mule before and they met force with force, and guile with guile. As a matter of fact, honours were almost equal, but the mule, being unable to speak, could not tell his new owners the true state of affairs.

At last the great day approached. The next day there was to be a Meet at Dumore, some six miles away, which McGinty was to attend

"You can let the baste gallop all the way, and that'll take some of the divilment out of him by the time he arrives," advised Mrs. McGinty, who had assumed command in all matters connected with the mule.

McGinty thought otherwise, and was very apprehensive about the morrow, but he knew there was no use in arguing with his wife. He had not yet convinced himself that he would be acting rightly in Colonel Dalton's eyes, and the thought disturbed him, but he had not got to live with the Colonel.

Mrs. McGinty had not been married to her husband nearly twenty years for nothing. She knew all there was to know about him, and could read his innermost thoughts. Of his courage she had no fear, nor had she any apprehensions for his riding ability, but of his dislike of offending his erstwhile landlord she had every anxiety. With this in view, she prepared an extra special breakfast for him and, when she had poured out his tea, went over to a cupboard, and, taking out a large black bottle, added a generous supply of its contents to the tea in the cup.

"There's more just before you start," she said meaningly, as her husband stretched out his hand and grasped his cup eagerly.

Denis McGinty had several large cups of tea, with the same infusion, that morning, and with each his courage rose until he felt that he was a match for His Satanic Majesty himself. There was only one point in the adventure where he had overcome his wife. He had seen her one evening ripping up a red flannel petticoat and, asking her what she intended, she had informed him that her husband was going to wear a red coat at the Hunt, just like the gentry. At this remark the fighting blood of the McGintys rose and won the day, and the woman had been compelled to abandon the idea.

The Meet at Dumore was timed for eleven o'clock, but by nine Denis McGinty, clad in his best breeches and Sunday coat, walked into the yard with a stout ash plant in his hand. Here he was met by his wife and three neighbours, whom she had summoned to aid in preparing the mule, for the hands were all in the fields getting the potatoes; work too important to be interrupted.

The mule had been put in the old bull-house, which was built of stone, and the door had been reinforced by an iron gate, so that there were no fears of the animal breaking loose, and its heels and teeth could do little damage. It was, however, one thing housing it safely and quite another capturing it when required for work. Nobody had yet dared to approach it in the stall, for it had to be left loose for the simple reason that it had broken two cow-chains and eaten several lengths of rope. Native ingenuity had, eventually, enabled the McGintys to overcome this difficulty, though it meant rather roundabout methods which took some time.

"Just you get up in the loft and drop this noose over the head of him, Jem, and draw it tight," said Mrs. McGinty, handing the man in question a long rope with a ready-made noose on the end of it.

"Maybe it's not standin' under the hole, he'll be?" said the man, thinking of the small opening through which the hay was passed down into the manger. "Shure, isn't the boards rotten enough, and you can pull thim up where you wants? Besides, half of thim is up already with gettin' the divil," answered the woman promptly.

"I'll go," volunteered McGinty, to whom the job of roping the mule was usually

assigned.

"You'll just stay where you are and not dirty yourself," said his wife emphatically.

Jem went up to the loft and dangled the noosed rope down through various holes in the floor, but apparently the mule knew what he was trying to do and dodged round the stall, kicking and biting vigorously, while the four spectators watched operations from the doorway.

Jem spent nearly half an hour in his endeavours to get the noose over the mule's head, and then his perspiring face appeared through a hole in the floor.

"Would it do if I got it over a hind leg

of him, Mrs. Mac?" he asked.

"No," shouted the woman. "He'd just ate it off. You'll have to get the head of him."

"Then somebody else can have a try. It's like tryin' to rope an eel," said Jem as he hauled back the rope.

Patrick Dolan took up the job, and Michael Casey followed, but it was of no avail, and then a neighbouring bell announced ten o'clock.

"Glory be! We'll niver get the baste in time," ejaculated Mrs. McGinty in dismay. "Here, Dinis, put on my apron, and go up and have a try."

Denis had better luck and within the next twenty minutes he had the mule safely noosed, and the rope fastened securely round a rafter. Even in this position the animal was not yet properly captured, for he lashed out vigorously in all directions. It was Mrs. McGinty's turn now, and with dexterity she managed to cast a rope round each of the hind legs as they lashed out. When these were fastened tightly, the mule was ready for the saddle, which was adjusted and tightened by the man Jem hauling on the girth while he pressed one of his big boots into the animal's side.

"How do you get the bridle on?" he asked helplessly, while his gaze wandered from the bared teeth and wicked eyes to the closely laid-back ears.

"You hit him a crack on the side of the head and when he opens his mouth to bite you, you just slip the bit in, but mind your

hands," said Mrs. McGinty, speaking from

experience.

Jem asserted, by all the saints in the calendar, that it was not he that would be a party to any such proceeding, and McGinty was called down from the loft for the duty. After several abortive attempts, in which the mule almost won, the bridle was adjusted in a sort of a way. It happened to be a regular hunting bridle with two bits, one a bar and the other a snaffle. The mule had never had more than one bit in his mouth at a time, and he hated even the one, consequently he rebelled against two. McGinty had managed to get the bar into place, but the second bit caused him infinite trouble. If the bar was in the snaffle was out, and if he managed to get the snaffle in place, the bar would not go in with it. At last, with perspiration pouring down his face, he agreed with his adversary that the bar bit alone would have to do, and the snaffle must just hang loose.

There remained the job of getting the animal out of its stall. The rope round its neck was untied from the rafter and two of the men tugged vigorously on it, while the other two hung on to the ropes round its hind Every time the mule baulked it was brought into a sitting position, and a few inches gained, but it was twenty minutes to eleven before the animal was safely in the yard, and its head fastened tightly against

McGinty prepared to mount, but before he did so his wife provided him with a double

whisky, just to give him heart.

"How do you loose the ropes from the hind legs of him?" asked Jem, who, in company with Pat Dolan, was holding them.

"Just let thim go, and they won't be long there," said Mrs. McGinty with con-, his bridle as well as on his tail?"

The men let them loose and the mule proved that its mistress was a true prophet.

A sack was then placed over its head, while McGinty with a flying leap placed himself in the saddle and gathered up the reins.

"Turn the baste's head to Dumore,"

warned Mrs. McGinty.

The mule's head was turned in the required direction, and the rope removed. animal promptly began to jib, but in response to a few lusty blows of a stick by its owner's wife it bolted out of the yard and clattered down the road.

"It's not takin' long he'll be," said Jem.

"Will the baste be after stoppin' at the Meet?" inquired Michael anxiously.

"Six mile of that'll quiet him," said Patrick Dolan emphatically.

"Dinis's ash plant'll knock the divil out

of him," remarked Mrs. McGinty.

It was only ten minutes past eleven when Denis McGinty galloped right into the middle of the Meet. His mount seemed to know that he was expected to stop there, for he did so with a suddenness that almost threw his rider over his head. He stood panting and blowing for a few moments, but recovered himself before the members of the Hunt, and began to look round.

The arrival of the new-comer had caused much hilarity among the younger members, but Captain Rowan, the Master, purple with

rage, rode up to him.

"What the de'il do you mean by this?"

he demanded.

"Just keep your distance, sir," said McGinty respectfully, as he touched his hat. "He's mighty handy wid his feet."

The Master turned an even deeper shade of purple. "Just clear off," he said imperiously, but he took the suggestion of keeping his distance.

"I've come to hunt," said McGinty, with

just a hint of defiance in his voice.

"You're not going to hunt with my pack on a thing like that," roared Captain Rowan.

The mule appeared to understand the disparaging remark, for he lashed out with a hind foot in an endeavour to gauge the distance, and the Master backed his horse The mule and its rider were by this time the centre of a crowd, and the animal's wicked-looking eyes were wandering round while it kept one ear cocked to the front and the other to the rear.

"I say, Mr. McGinty," called out a young "What's the idea of a red ribbon on

"It's to show that he's as handy wid his fore feet as wid his hind ones, Mr. Crofton," answered McGinty quietly.

"Now then, McGinty," interrupted the "I really must ask you to move Master.

away."

McGinty was considerably overawed by the Master's manner, and as most of the effects of the fortifying spirit with which he had been injected had worn off during the mad gallop from his home, he was inclined to obey, and he touched the mule with his The mule, however, intended to stay, and began to lash out with his heels in all directions, while his rider sat as if he were glued to the saddle. In the circle of horsemen who surrounded him a few were laughing, but most of them were saying things that ought not to have been uttered.

"Look here, you're delaying the Hunt,"

said the angry Master.

"It's sorry I am, sir, but I'm ready any time," said the culprit, who guessed that his mount, and not he, was the ruler, and felt that a certain amount of defiance must be the order of the day.

While the purple-faced Master was trying to think of something suitable to say, Colonel Dalton rode up to see the cause of the commotion.

"Hello, McGinty!" he said, as he saw that individual's face across the pommel of Captain Rowan's saddle. Then, as he came round and saw the man's steed, his face became a study.

"You haven't got your mount properly bridled," he exclaimed, as he saw the snaffle

bit hanging below the animal's jaw.

"If you can put that bit in for me, Colonel," said McGinty with all seriousness, "I'll give you a golden sovereign."

A roar of laughter from the assembled company greeted this remark, and the Colonel, overcome by the humour of it, joined in.

"I don't see anything to laugh at, Dalton," said the Master reprovingly. His indignation at the arrival of the mule had caused him to overlook this detail in its equipment, and it annoyed him still more.

"Surely you're not going to hunt on that animal?" said the Colonel to his erstwhile tenant, ignoring Captain Rowan's reproof.

"Of course I am, sir," said the man

respectfully.

"Can it jump?"

"Shure, hasn't it four legs the same as a horse?" answered McGinty naïvely.

"Do you mean to say that the animal hasn't been schooled?" pursued the Colonel.

"Didn't it take five of us nearly two hours to get the saddle and bridle on the baste this mornin', Colonel? Do you think there's no work on the farm besides it? Quit it, you divil!" The last remark was addressed to the mule, which had reached round in an attempt to bite its rider's leg, for which it was rewarded with a vicious jab of the toe of his boot.

The Colonel and Captain Rowan looked at each other blankly. They saw that it was a case of making the best of things, and the latter gave the order to move off, having first warned McGinty to take a place at the rear. It was all very well giving directions

to the man, but the hounds had attracted the attention of the mule and he pulled his rider well up into their wake.

"Have a care, sir, have a care," came the stereotyped warning from a whip as McGinty

pressed on.

"Look out for yourself," gasped the rider of the mule. "It's like holdin' a steam ingin."

Master and whips looked round as they heard the words, and the sight that met their eyes appalled them. The mule, with its ears laid back, its teeth bared, and its eyes nearly bulging out of its head, was breaking into a canter. The road was narrow, so, in self-defence, they broke into a trot while the mule increased its pace into a kind of halfgallop. McGinty sawed that iron mouth, but produced no effect, and soon the Master had his horse in a canter, while the hounds were fast getting out of control.

"Keep them forward, keep them forward!" shouted the Master, as he heard the sharp rattle of the mule's hoofs pursuing his

precious hounds.

Then they arrived at the entrance of the Park, where the first draw was to be made. Instead of entering, as usual, at a sober pace, the whips swept their hounds through, and followed them up the drive at a gallop. The covert side was reached at last, and even the mule seemed glad of the halt. Hounds were thrown in, while the followers began to take up advantageous places.

McGinty had managed, unnoticed by the others, to guide his mount to the back of a small spinney, and he had done it in a peculiar way. He had let go one rein and had pulled with all his strength on the other, thus bringing the mule's head almost into the saddle, but he kept the sole of his boot against its jaw to prevent it from biting him. In this position he had kept it turning round and round and, aided by a side movement on the animal's part, had managed to bring the mule into its present place of comparative obscurity.

He was waiting, quietly wondering where the fox would break, when suddenly he saw it coming towards him. His mule saw it at the same time, and as he hated anything of the canine tribe, and had been baulked in his efforts to get at the hounds, he promptly bolted in its direction. McGinty tugged manfully at his reins but was unable to stop it in time. The fox saw him, and turned back into cover right into the very jaws of the hounds, who chopped it in view of the whole field.

A shout of dismay went up at this occurrence, and the Master came thundering across to remonstrate with the clodhopper who was responsible. As he came round the spinney he saw McGinty and his mule having a diversity of opinion as to which way to pursue.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, as he pulled

up short.

through, and thereby gained some ground. A gate was the next obstacle, but it had been opened before he arrived at it. A gentleman happened to be holding the gate open for a lady, but he did not see why he should do the same for an adjectived mule, and he let it go. It struck the mule on the quarters as he went through and he responded promptly by kicking hard



"He crashed straight into the gate, and broke several bars, but the Master held his ground."

Before he could say more, however, the hounds proclaimed that another fox had broken cover, and he rode off hurriedly.

McGinty was some distance from the place where the fresh fox broke, and he was towards the tail of the field when he found a small hedge between him and the hounds. He prepared himself for a jump, but, instead of rising to it, his mount charged straight

and effectively. The gentleman thought it would have been better had he continued to hold the gate rather than receive most of it, in little pieces, all over his person.

The mule was in reasonably hard condition, but McGinty's feeding was not equal to that given to the regular hunters, and gradually he fell behind. The erstwhile carrier of a maxim gun could not charge

hedges and gallop hard for ever, even with the excitement of the chase to spur him on. Luck, however, favoured the mule, for the fox began to run in a circle in an effort to get home, and, by taking a short cut, Mc-Ginty joined up again.

Frenzied cries and yells greeted the two as, charging through a hedge, they ran into the broadside of the Hunt, but undismayed McGinty again took up the running. Madly the whips urged on their tired hounds in their efforts for their safety, and the chase of the fox became a secondary consideration. It was a country of barbed wire

McGinty, with his hat on the back of his head, his ash plant under his arm and a rein in each hand, was unable to stop the impetus of the mule. He crashed straight into the gate, and broke several bars, but the Master held his ground. While he rained blows on the head of the mule with his hunting crop to prevent it from biting him he told McGinty, in plainer language than he had ever used before, exactly what he thought of him and of his mount. Denis McGinty was accustomed to hear, and to use, language of a lurid nature, but here he met his master and he acknowledged it by gazing



and, of necessity, gates had to be used, and this proved of great advantage to McGinty and his mount. He himself was not able to open them, but others held them carefully for him to get through and away from their neighbourhood.

The mule seemed to have acquired what is usually known as a second wind, for it was going strong and pressing close up to the hounds when the Master saw an opportunity and seized it eagerly. The hounds had just streamed through a gate, and his whips with them, when he jumped down from his horse and slammed it right in the face of the mule, which was leading the field.

"To the Kennels," he roared to the nearest whip, while gallantly he held the gate.

in silent admiration until he had finished.

"Yes, sir," he said, as the speaker paused for breath.

"What the adjectived perdition do you mean by this?" asked the Master, when he had come to the end of his abuse.

"Mean by what, sir?" asked McGinty

"By bringing a savage animal to the Hunt, and riding down my hounds," roared Captain Rowan, enraged by the calmness of the culprit.

"I didn't ride down your hounds, beggin'

your pardon, sir."

"You did your level best, and you had a fox chopped too."

"That was an accident that might happen

to anybody," said McGinty in reply to the last charge.

"An accident!" almost screamed the Master. "Why, your mule attacked him."

"He didn't touch him, sir," said the other

stoutly.

"Are you quite mad, McGinty?" asked Captain Rowan, controlling his voice as much as possible.

"There's others that's madder, sir," was

McGinty's ambiguous reply.

"Then Heaven help them if they're worse

than you," replied Captain Rowan.

At this moment Colonel Dalton, who had been at the tail of the Hunt, came up and saw the two talking across the gate. For many generations the Daltons had been the self-appointed guardians, moral and otherwise, of the McGintys, and he could see that, even though the bond of landlord and tenant had been severed, he must still regard himself as protector of the family. With this in mind he approached the pair, and reined up his horse within speaking distance.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" he asked apprehensively, for he knew there must be.

"This wretched tenant of yours has been heading foxes and riding down my hounds,"

bellowed the Master furiously.

"I'm not a wretched tenant, I'm a landowner, and I didn't head any foxes, only the one that got a fright when it saw the mule, and I didn't ride down your hounds," retorted McGinty, who felt fortified by the presence of the man who had always stood by him.

The Colonel looked from one to the other in perplexity. The Master had every cause to be annoyed, and most hunting people would have supported him without question, but McGinty's words were strictly true. Whether the heading of the fox were his crime or not, he had certainly not ridden down any hounds, but the latter was only a question of time.

"Why don't you ride a horse, McGinty, instead of that thing?" he asked. "Hunting is not natural for it, and there'll always

be trouble."

"I can't afford one, Colonel," said the

man politely.

"You never hunted before?" interrupted Captain Rowan.

No, sir."

"Then why are you beginning now?" "I'm one of the landowners," said

McGinty defiantly. "I've got a right."

"Nobody has a right to ride a savage

animal like that," said the Master, emphasising his remark by a vicious blow on the mule's nose.

"You wouldn't like me to hit your horse that way, sir," said McGinty quietly, with a

hint of reproof in his voice.

Captain Rowan looked rather abashed for letting his temper run away with him and ejaculated, "Sorry."

"Look here, McGinty," chipped in Colonel Dalton. "I'll sell you a horse cheap if you

"I don't want one, but thank you kindly all the same, Colonel," replied the man. don't want to hunt unless I'm made to."

"You don't want to hunt unless you're

made to?" echoed the Colonel.

"That I don't, sir," answered McGinty

emphatically.

"Who's making you?" interrupted Captain Rowan.

"It's you are, sir."

"What!" roared the Master, aghast at this utterance.

"Explain yourself, McGinty," said Colonel Dalton, who was as mystified as the Master.

"It's thim hins, Colonel."

"Thim hins?" repeated the puzzled Colonel.

"The ones the fox took," explained McGinty.

"Oh, hens! What about them?"

"He'll tell you," said McGinty, pointing to the secretary of the Hunt, who was among those close by.

"What's this about hens, Knight?" called out Captain Rowan, taking up the discussion.

"Oh, McGinty was claiming five shillings apiece for old hens, and I wouldn't pay it," said the official airily, coming as close as he considered safe.

"That's just why I've got to hunt,"

chimed in McGinty.

"Oh, I see," said Colonel Dalton, who knew his man. "As you received no payment for your fowls, you're going to take it out in hunting?"

"That's it, sir," asserted McGinty.

"How many birds were taken?" asked the angry Master, addressing his secretary.

"Five, sir," replied McGinty, before the

other could answer.

"All this for twenty-five shillings!" exclaimed the Master, directing a flow of language at his official that made him wince.

"A sovereign would have settled it, sir," suggested McGinty during a lull.

"Then why did you ask for twenty-five shillings?" demanded the precise secretary, in an endeavour to turn the Master's wrath on to somebody else.

"Shure, you wouldn't have me ask too little, Mr. Knight, and, besides, you might have beat me down," was the quiet

reply.

The Master turned to McGinty. "Look here, McGinty," he said firmly. "If we pay for those fowls, will it stop you hunting on

that animal?"

"Shure, didn't I buy the mule specially for huntin'?" said McGinty, realising his improved position. "He wouldn't have been bought if you'd paid me. What's to be done wid him now if I don't hunt wid him?"

Captain Rowan had cooled down considerably, and he reflected before he spoke again. "If I give you a fiver, will you sell the mule, and call the fowl square?" he asked.

"Of course I will, your honour," said the delighted man. "You can have the mule this very blessed minute. Shure, it's doin' well I am. I only paid three pound for him."

"Good Heavens!" gasped the Master, as he realised McGinty's mistaken impression. "I don't want him myself. Nothing would induce me to have a creature like that. Will you get rid of him if I give you a fiver?"

"Don't you want him for yourself, sir?"

asked the owner of the mule in a surprised tone

"I do not," said the other emphatically.
"I'm offering to give you five pounds if you'll get rid of that mule. You can sell him, shoot him, poison him, bomb him, or do anything else you like so long as you get rid of him."

"And what for would you be doin' that?"

"Because, McGinty, speaking as man to man, I don't ever want to see the beast again with my pack," replied Captain Rowan fervently.

"Be gob! If it comes to that, I don't either, sir," said McGinty. "What wid the joltin' of him, shure it's a new seat I'll be wantin' for meself as well as for me breeches."

As the man uttered this remark a roar of laughter rang through the assembled company, and even the Master regained his temper.

The sporting blood of the McGintys then came to the fore.

"If you'll send me a sovereign for thim hins, and hold that gate open for me, sir, you'll niver see me on this mule again," asserted its representative.

All that was sporting in the Master came to the surface as this simple sportsman rode through the gate.

"Your mount is an unmitigated devil, McGinty, but you're a darned fine rider to have stuck him," he said.

McGinty replied by raising his hat, and the Hunt cheered him as he galloped away.

DREAMS.

TIS mighty hard to put in words These dreams that don't come true: They drift around me all the time, These phantom thoughts of You; Mixed up with crazy, ghostly ships, And wishing-moons and things, And Pixie lights a-dancing, And rainbow faërie wings; And Autumn leaves just turning brown, And meadows damp with dew: A crooning tune 'neath a yellow moon In a sky of sapphire blue: And old, grey rocks and creeks and coves And sweet, warm western rain; And a long white road that lost itself In a little winding lane.

ROY BENNETT.



THE MAN OF MEANS.

SUPERSTITIOUS GUEST: Dear, dear—dinner is served and I have just realized that there will be thirteen at table! Are you aware of it?

HOST: Well, what about it? I can afford it, can't I?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

ONE FOR THE P.M.G.

By Dudley Clark.

For some reason or other, known only to the postal authorities, our pillar-box stands in the most deeply shaded portion of the lane. Even in our sparsely populated hamlet a collision was bound to occur some dark night.

"I beg your pardon!" I said, backing away in confusion.

"It's quite all right," she replied in a soft voice that still betrayed some agitation. "Would you mind striking a match? I dropped my letter."

I found her letter for her and we parted after a brief but agreeable discussion which we concluded by impartially blaming the lane, the postal authorities and the local council. As I retired pondering, I heard the gate clang behind her and was able to place her as the daughter of the widow lady who had recently taken possession of Tudor Cottage.

Her letter had been lying face upwards when I discovered it by the light of my match and I could scarcely help noting the address on it. It was directed to a person to whom I write a good deal myself. Very often this person's reply takes the form of a neatly printed slip

expressing his deep regret at being unable to make use of the enclosed manuscript, for the offer of which he is much obliged. Sometimes, however, he sends me another slip which enables me to enter the local bank without my customary hang-dog expression.

We met several times at that pillar-box, and, the weather being sufficiently English to provoke easy and stimulating intercourse, progressed rapidly along that well-worn highway of acquaintanceship. Then it happened that the next time I strutted into the bank and pushed my nicest kind of slip across the counter I saw her standing at the bank blotting-pad coaxing a hair from the amorous clutches of the bank pen.

I noted with pleasure that in front of her lay a precisely similar slip. I raised my hat, gave her "Good day!" and called in at the newsagent's for my copy of The Weekly Whatnot.

When next we met I noticed that she sighed

as she posted her letter.

"In the course of the past few weeks," I remarked, "we have shared the terrors of a bazaar, a whist-drive, and a village amateur dramatic performance. May I be permitted to inquire the reason for that sigh?"

"It's the postage," she said. "It does mount up so. If the Postmaster-General could only realise what penny postage would mean to a poor little scribbler like me!"

"Poor little scribblers like us," I corrected.
"Well, who knows? Perhaps, when he's finished asking everybody to 'Say it by telephone,' he'll give us a thought. Meantime—er—wouldn't it be rather fun if we could get one up on him?"

"How?" she queried.

"Why," I explained. "Here are you and I writing by nearly every post to The Weekly Whatnot and other journals, and using up no

TO-DAY'S ANNIVERSARY. From the "Daily Harbinger".

Nobody has ever heard of Felicia Phemus, who was born exactly a hundred years ago to-day.

Yet her story is one of amazing interest, and Felicia's name will probably be remembered long after the names of Dickens, Browning and Tennyson are forgotten.

Her childhood was passed in the peaceful surroundings of Upper Norwood, the only incident of note being that she was patted on the head by the Duke of Wellington. Her friends long afterwards recollected that they commented on this fact at the time, prophesying



THE BELLS.

VICAR (to bell-ringer—who is also the local fireman): Look here, Burge. I want you in future to differentiate between your Sunday and week-day duties. It is most unseemly that my congregation should feel compelled to come to church at the double.

end of stamps. Now, presuming—for the sake of argument—that we were married. We could then, without any shadow of impropriety, put our manuscripts in the same envelopes and save a frightful lot of money."

I forget precisely what she said, but I am glad to think that the Post Office is going to get it badly in the neck

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An asbestos-lined pocket for men who are careless pipe-smokers is the latest invention. Ladies should find one useful which will hold a modern novel.

that Felicia would some day bring fame to the name of Phemus.

When she reached the age of eighteen she was wooed by Septimus Parbingle, who afterwards wrote that famous child's classic, *His Mother's Darling*, or Climbing Heavenward.

Miss Phemus has left on record in one of her unpublished letters her sorrow at having to refuse Mr. Parbingle, "than whom," she said, "no one had a greater knowledge of the works of Richard Hooker."

Mr. Parbingle accepted his fate with fortitude. He wept copiously on the bosom of his landlady, and then went abroad for seventeen years. When he returned he found that Felicia was famous. Three years earlier she had written her epoch-making My Soul's Purgatory, a work which the more discerning critics recognised as heralding a new power in the realm of devotional literature, and then, on the eve of Parbingle's landing in England, she had given to the world her Females' Philosophy.

This poem, running into three thousand lines, was eagerly read, and fashionable society quoted it almost as much as the Scriptures. Colonel Grapnel at Magdala said he would rather have written that poem than wring the neck of any insubordinate Abyssinian; Gladstone is said

Felicia, now no longer young, and with a sob of joy she whispered, "Septimus, I am thine!"

But it was not to be. The arrangements for the wedding went on apace, but Felicia's wornout spirit could not stand the strain of the approaching happiness, and one evening, with her lover's hand in hers, she murmured twice her poem, *The Females' Philosophy*, and then, turning to look in the faithful one's eyes, she passed away.

Parbingle was heartbroken, and in his misery destroyed all known copies of Miss Phemus's work. And so, with the exception of a few odd lines such as, "A woman is not a man,



APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE.

"Please, sir, the widowed lady in the garden told me to come up to the house for a bit of bread and cheese."

"That's not a widowed lady. That's my wife attending to the bees!"

to have written to Felicia asking permission to quote the last two hundred lines in his speech of '68; and few village concerts took place without someone reciting the *Philosophy*.

Fame, however, did not spoil Felicia. She still tended her aged mother and watered her geraniums and visited the sick people in and around Norwood. So kind-hearted was she that often, when utterly worn out, she would soothe the weary head of a patient sufferer by reading right through her masterpiece.

The end came suddenly. In 1876 she received a visit from Mr. Parbingle, who had been in England for fifteen years, but who had with fine delicacy refused to pay attention to her while she was so famous. He proposed to

she is herself," and, "Lonely love, like lilies, lingers," all her work is lost.

But the memory of a fragrant spirit is with us yet.

Charles H. Lea.



THE waiters at a new dance club are disguised as brigands. Well, that makes a nice change from brigands disguised as waiters.

The following notice is displayed in a country cemetery: "Refuse To Be Put Here." Local inhabitants say they won't be put there till they are past refusing.

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE. By Margaret Mawson.

"Who's taken my sponge from the bathroom?" demanded Lena irritably, as she sat down to breakfast.

"Sponge?" echoed Gerald. "I borrowed one to clean the car. Sorry I forgot to put it back.

"I don't know what you are making all the fuss about," he continued, in reply to her quite justifiable complaints. "I'll wash it, and I won't use it again. It seems to me that with all this talk in the papers about economy, the best way to economise is to use everything as much as possible. There's a perfectly good sponge lying

I admit, but he has promised not to do it again. I shouldn't make any more fuss about a little thing."

"Tisn't a little thing," declared John. "It's

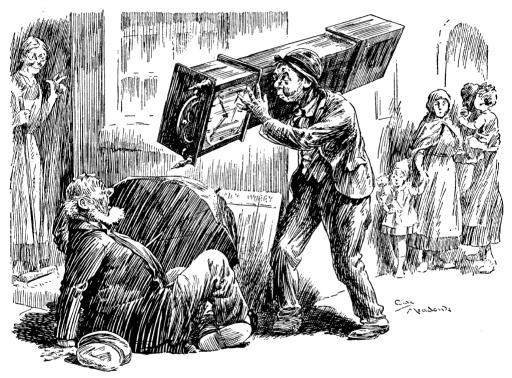
a perfectly 'normous sponge."

We are all used to John's interruptions and

pay no attention to them.

"You should leave other people's things alone, Gerald, old man," I continued. "That's a good idea of yours, though, about economy. It would make a good competition to see who could think of the most original way of using an everyday thing for something else."

"Entries to be heard at first meal to-mor-



A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

OLD GENTLEMAN (who has been accidentally knocked down): Why can't you wear a wristwatch?

idle nearly all day, when there are hundreds of things it might be used for."

"Use your own," snapped Lena.

Lena is eighteen and has just begun her first term at college, which makes me, her father, feel rather ancient. Gerald, who refused to stay at school after he was sixteen, is now a junior (very junior) clerk. Then there are the twins, John and Jane, who are what Jane calls "unlucky years old." They are a jolly crowd, and usually get on very well together. I was not surprised that Lena was annoyed, but it seemed to be time for me to act "the tactful father."

"Well, Lena," I began, "it is very annoying,

row," chimed in John. "No entrance fee. Fill in the coupon on page six."

"What's the prize?" asked Jane.

"A guinea a week for life, and half a crown for every entry published," chanted John. "The editor reserves the right——"

"Oh, shut up!" I implored. "I didn't think I would give a prize, but if you want to try it, I will. Two shillings to the winner; the judges to be mother and myself, at tea tonight."

"Who's first?" asked John, when we sat down to tea.

I had forgotten all about the competition; so

had Gerald and Lena. John was not going to let slip the chance of two shillings.

"Be sports," he urged. "A competition is

no good for two people."
"We'll give you till the end of tea to think of something," I said, "but I might as well warn you that obvious examples won't have a chance."

"Yes," added mother, "such as hairpins" ("What are they?" interjected Lena), "forks for removing bicycle tyres, clothes-brushes for cleaning shoes."

"And sponges for cleaning cars," murmured

Gerald.

There was not much conversation for about twenty minutes, while we all got on with the job in hand-getting it from hand to mouth, I mean. cosies." Lena is proud of her size-three shoes. "Good idea," said Jane, "and dad's could be used as tea-cosies."

"Gerald next," I said, ignoring her remark.

"I've got two as well. We could use the souppan as a gong, and the spoon to ring it. The gong needn't be rung till the soup is poured out.

"Dull," commented John.

"Then there's that brush mother does the banisters with "-Gerald's eyes twinkled-"it would do awfully well to wash your back."

Lena giggled. "Not mine, thank you. Nice and clean I'd be, bathing with the banister brush and the garage sponge!"

John was getting excited. "You can go



A WOMAN'S REASON.

HE: Why did you allow that fellow Brown to kiss you in the drawing-room last night? SHE: Well, you know what a cold, draughty place the hall is!

To watch the twins anyone would think dinner at school was a poor affair. "Horrid muck!" John had called it once, but Jane had retorted: "Well, you always have two helpings of everything.'

"We'll begin now," I announced when most of us had finished, and the twins were waiting for their second wind. "Eldest first."

"Can I say two things?" asked Lena. "Right. The tongs could be used to crack

"Rotten!" said John. "We hardly ever have nuts, and what are your teeth for?"

"No remarks from the gallery," I remonstrated. "What's the other?"

"My bedroom slippers could be used for egg

next, Jane," he said. "I don't think much of any of those ideas."

Jane spoke with her mouth full.

"I thought if you fixed a cardboard box on the gramophone, instead of a record, and put some milk in a bottle-well, then you could put the bottle in the box, and there you are."

"Well," teased Gerald, "what about it?"

"The milk would be churned, of course, and there's the butter for tea."

I laughed. "Before we can judge the suggestion of competitor number three, it must be given a trial. Now, John."

John spoke very loudly and fast.

"You know how mother has to spend hours stirring soup and things. Well, if she got my



"Yus, an' I shouldn't like to call yer what I should like to call yer!"

old bicycle and propped it on chairs, so that one wheel was over the pan, all she's got to do is to tie a spoon to the wheel and set it going. What are you all laughing at?" he said indignantly, "It's a jolly good idea. A wheel goes on turning for ages. I've tried it."

We gave him the prize, but mother still pre-

fers the old-fashioned way.



ANSWERED.

THE usual tea-time procedure, Willie sitting at the table, whistling, fidgeting and enjoying

A DOG'S PRAYER.

Oh, master, you can surely see All that you do is wise to me.

I never weigh your right or wrong, Enough that you and I belong.

Success may crown your dearest plan, Yet love you more I never can.

And though you miserably fail, No change knows my delighted tail.

Your voice can raise me to the height Or shroud my soul in blackest night.



A RESTAURANT THRILL.

MR. BROWNE-SMYTHE (to Mrs. Browne-Smythe): Would you prefer table d'hôte or à la carte?

SMALL DAUGHTER (lunching for the first time at a large restaurant and much interested in the chef's wagon): Do let's have it off the cart, Daddy!

himself in general. At last Father remonstrated somewhat heatedly:

"Now Willie!" he bellowed. "Behave! Don't disgrace yourself. What's worse than being a silly little kid?"

WILLIE: Being a great big noisy donkey, Dad!



"Gentlemen," said Blivins, in reply to a delegation that had called on him to ask him to serve on the house committee of the club, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the honour, but there is absolutely nothing doing. I have a wife, a son-in-law, and a second-hand car, and I think that is trouble enough for one man."

I watch your eye, your lip, your hand, Trying your thought to understand.

Within my heart one earnest plea,
"Where you are let me always be."

Fay Inchfaun.



HARRINGTON: How old is your wife? CARRINGTON: According to her latest estimate she is about halfway between her two children.



A METHOD of producing flowers by electricity is announced. We ourselves have often grown them from bulbs.

Before the Mirror By MIMOSA

My advice to smart women who demand the very best results is to leave most toilet preparations alone. When facial applications are necessary get only the pure ingredients just as they come to the chemist himself. I will tell you in this column from time to time just what to get and how to use it. Do not be persuaded into buying some cheap toilet preparation. Any chemist can supply you with genuine concentrated ingredients, and I know personally that most firms make a speciality of selling original packages of all kinds of pure ingredients, both direct and by post. I can point out to you, however, many useful hints which involve no expense at all.

- "Renewing the Complexion."—Yes, the discoloured faded outer veiling of the complexion must be absolutely removed, and I know of no safe way to do this except to use a little Mercolized Wax, applying it at night like cold cream. The active principle in Mercolized Wax soon absorbs the weakened and devitalised surface which so annoys you, revealing the fresh and beautiful young skin underneath, which is always there only waiting to be freed. The process usually takes about ten days, is quite harmless, and acts so imperceptibly that no one can tell what you are doing.
- "Removing Hair."—I always recommend caution in the selection of a hair remover, and therefore suggest that you only use Sipolite, instead of the depilatories you mention. Get about half-an-ounce from the chemist, and mix a little into a paste with a few drops of water. Applied direct to the superfluous hair, it causes it to wither and die in a few moments, when it can be rubbed off, leaving no trace.
- "The Rouge Question."—Complexions of your type never acquire a natural rosy tint, no matter what may be done for them. If you really insist upon a colour, let me dissuade you from your evident inclination to use rouge. A far more refined thing to do is merely to apply a little ordinary Colliandum with the finger-tips, thus accomplishing the desired result by a means which is not obvious.
- "About Soap."—I should say that your trouble is caused by the soaps you have been trying. Personally, I always recommend a soap called Pilenta, because I have never known it to fail to give satisfaction. It is an absolutely pure, superfatted soap, designed exclusively for use upon delicate skins, and it has the most delightful perfume I have ever found.
- "About Shampooing."—Even the best shampoo is somewhat drying, and if your hair is not naturally oily, I suggest that just before the shampoo you apply olive oil thoroughly to the scalp, rubbing it into the hair roots vigorously. Then use pure Stallax for the shampoo. Dissolve a teaspoonful in a cup of hot water. This will leave the hair very clean and glossy.
- "Fashionable Figure."—Clynol Berries not only eliminate fat from the body, but also correct the tendency, which is usually constitutional, to create fatty matter. Get a few from your chemist and take as directed.
- "Fading Hair."—Tammalite is the most satisfactory drug to restore grey hair to its original colour. Two ounces of the concentrate mixed with about the same quantity of bay rum is all that you require. Non-greasy, it does not stain the scalp or pillow. Apply with a small sponge.











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The Mindsor Magazine.

No. 407.

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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

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Binding Cases for half-yearly volumes can be obtained through any bookseller at 1s. 6d.

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903. Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by the Canadian Magazine Post.

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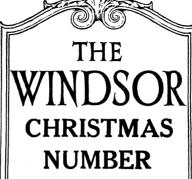
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"He wandered down the Mall, watching the crowd. They were talking excitedly, laughing, cheering, and singing, and even embracing each other." (See page 647.)

ARMISTICE

Stacy Aumonier

N the evening of November 10, 1918, a French officer, in the pale blue uniform of a Captain of Artillery, was ambling slowly up and down Little Compton Street. There was about his slow but watchful movements the air of a man who is being kept waiting. And such indeed proved to be the case. For after some minutes there came hurrying in his direction a fellow-countryman, of somewhat similar build to himself, but in mufti. And the greeting of the latter was:

"Pardon, my dear Anton! I was de-

tained."

They shook hands with cordiality, and

repaired to the Monaco.

Over glasses of vermouth they carried on the following conversation in their own language:

"You have heard the news, of course?"

"The Armistice?"

"It is to be signed to-morrow morning."

- "Thank God! But that I imagine is not the urgent matter you wished to discuss with me."
- "As you say, Max, that is not the matter. But listen, the war is to all intents and purposes over. Our cause and our country have claimed four and a half precious years of our lives. During that time one had no right to claim any consideration for one's own interests, if they were in any way likely to affect the great issue. Am I right?"

"Perfectly, my dear Anton."

"But now that it is over one may perhaps indulge a little in the consideration of one's own personal affairs, eh? Passions that have—that have slumbered may be assuaged. You remember that little affair of your own at Chambéry many years ago?"

"With that upstart lieutenant in the

Dragoons?"

"I had the honour to be of assistance to you. And at the time you said——"

The face of the officer in mufti looked startled.

"My dear Anton, do I understand that you wish to fight a duel?"

The officer addressed as Anton bowed

solemnly.

"Can it be that—that English officer, Captain Hignett? I remember you telling me that there had been trouble. Pauline! . . . Wasn't that the girl's name?"

"She was my fiancée."

"But a duel! My dear old man, the English do not fight duels. Even in our country it is no longer——"

Anton rapped his fist down upon the

table.

"There shall be a duel even if it is the last one in the story of the world. A duel,

or a thrashing, or a murder."

His eyes rolled, his pale cheeks shook as though with an ague of passion. It was clear from his restless movements that his nerves were all on edge. His neck was scarred by the track of a piece of shrapnel. He was barely thirty-five years of age, but his close-cropped hair was nearly white. His face was lined and twisted, like a man who for a generation has been observing the tortures of the damned.

"I regret this extremely," said his friend.
"You gave me a promise," answered

Anton de Thiepval, almost sullenly.

"Which I shall most assuredly keep, old friend. I only repeat—I regret this extremely. The War is over. Let us bury all animosities."

"There are some things which only

cowards and poltroons bury."

"Come then. Remind me of the details. It was, I think, two years ago. Things move so rapidly these days.—I am myself submerged in the vibrations of tragedy."

"You will remember, my dear Max, I was liaison officer at that time attached to the

British 97th Division. I was slightly wounded during the first week of the war and sent to a base hospital at Rouen. It was there I met Pauline. She was the daughter of an advocate at Lamballe, an old Breton family. When I met her she was a ward sister, one of the most beautiful, adorable women who ever lived. I fell desperately in love, and I had every reason to believe she reciprocated my affections. But she was a difficult woman to understand, Max. She made me jealous from the very first. She loved everyone. At first I thought it was the men, and that she was flirting with them. In time I came to understand that it was her way. She had no capacity for flirting at all. She loved everyone, men, women, children, even dogs. She was lavish with her affections. And so absorbed was she with her work that you could safely aver that love with her was a pure abstraction. I ceased to be jealous, but I told her plainly that I loved her and wanted to make her my wife. Her answer was always the same. She would smileoh, ever so kindly, and murmur: 'We are all mad, Anton. Wait till this is all over.' I never got anything more satisfactory out of her than that, but it satisfied me. She could not look at me as she did and not mean more. I set my mind, like an alarm clock, against the day when it would all be over. I repeated to myself again and again: 'We are all mad. But one day we shall be sane, and Pauline will be my wife.' When I was discharged from the hospital I was passed as unfit for active service, but owing to my knowledge of English, I was, as I just told you, appointed liaison officer to this British division. It was then that I met Captain Hignett. He was a good-looking man of that lean English kind, reserved but entirely friendly. He too had been wounded while serving with a machine-gun company, and was now a transport officer at Amiens. My work brought me in close touch with him, and we spent many pleasant days and evenings together. I saw nothing of Pauline, although I wrote to her regularly. Her replies were brief and perfunctory, although couched in affectionate terms. I could not complain of this. I knew the poor girl was worked to death, and the world was 'not yet sane.' A whole year passed. And then one day to my delight I heard that she was coming to Amiens. She had been very ill, and her father having some important Government post at Amiens she joined him there for a brief rest. I need not say that I lost no time in paying the family my respects. I found Pauline looking pale and worn, but more adorable than ever. She was surrounded by her family—there were two sisters, a cousin, and an aunt in the household-so I had great difficulty in getting her by herself. But when the chestnuts began to bloom along the side of the canal she would sometimes go there to sit or read, and there I would pour out my heart to her. She appeared to be in a yielding mood, and again and again I imagined she was on the point of succumbing to my entreaties. it always came back to the same story-The world was insane. It was impossible to form judgments, to do things rationally. In such a mood one might act, and then live to repent. Men and women were all behaving in a crazy unbalanced way, eating. drinking, loving, knowing that there might be no to-morrow. I accepted her attitude as a compliance upon the terms of the war being over.

"And then one evening I made my fatal mistake. I took this Captain Hignett to visit her. I little knew the anguish this was to bring me. He talked in his quiet voice to the father about fishing and shooting.

"You know what these English are. You could not tell from his manner what he was thinking or feeling. He almost seemed to ignore Pauline. He certainly paid her no compliments, and expressed no great anxiety to see her again. Walking home from the house he made no comment about her, or about the family. He talked shop.

"The father, however, had invited him there to dinner the following Sunday. It was on this occasion that I became aware of the preoccupation of Pauline. When I was talking to her I observed her eyes following the stranger. . . . My dear Max, English are our good Allies. I do not propose to offer any criticism. But I am convinced that they and we will never understand each other. This man embodied in himself the salient characteristics of his race. As the days passed I could not determine whether the man was a fool or a consummate actor. He was almost gauche in his attitude towards Pauline, nor could I get him to speak of her. But I saw him glance at her once or twice in a way I did not like. It was the expression of a man either dreaming, mad, or struggling with temptation. I tried to draw him out by enlarging upon my own love for Pauline, and he infuriated me with his attitude of detached patronage.



"'When they saw me coming Pauline looked distinctly flustered."

It was as though he could not be bothered with my troubles, but he had to work some problem out by himself. A week later I

met them walking side by side by the canal, Pauline doing all the talking, and the Englishman frowning and looking very solemn. When they saw me coming Pauline looked distinctly flustered, but Hignett appeared quite unconcerned and he greeted me as though the position were quite normal. I need hardly say that after that there was a coldness between us.

"I was of course prepared to concede that this meeting may have been an accident, but my hopes in this direction were quickly dissipated. They were seen together day after day. My friends brought me reports of clandestine meetings. Pauline, I could see, was profoundly disturbed in my presence. I suspected that she arranged things so that I could never get her alone. She began to adopt towards me that attitude which every lover detests, the attitude of sisterly pity. I consoled myself with the memory of her reflection that the world was not sane. I felt convinced that she would do nothing until the war was over, and then we should all meet on equal ground. Hignett had the advantage of me in that he was stationed at Amiens. My duties called me all over the place, and I was away for days and weeks at a time, But my rage at the perfidy of this Englishman was beginning to reach boiling-point. One day I was under orders to go to the other end of the line, and I knew that I should probably be away for months.

"The night before I left I met Captain Hignett in the street. After a formal greeting I told him I was going and I said sternly: 'Captain Hignett, you have an English expression—It isn't done! I would ask you to ponder that carefully in relation to your actions.' He looked surprised, then answered coolly: 'I'm not conscious of doing, or being about to do, anything dishonourable.' I replied: 'Very good! I trust to your honour as an officer and a gentleman,' and I turned on my heel.

"Barely a month passed, Max, barely a month, when the whole world came tumbling about my ears. I was at Bapaume when a friend sent me the soul-destroying news. One of my sources of comfort had been that a few days after my departure Pauline was due to return to Rouen. Now came the news that instead of going to Rouen she had gone to England with Hignett. She had married him at Amiens. I cannot tell you what I suffered. I tried to be sent back to the firing line. I craved for death, extinction. I was only sustained by the slumbering passions of revenge. My soul raged with blind anger against this perfidious traitor and the woman who said that such a thing as marriage was not to be considered 'till the world was sane.'

"Sane! God in heaven! Was I sane? Was Pauline sane? Or was this a prankish reaction to the world insanity? I couldn't sleep. My thoughts were poisoned. I had never had a fair chance. While my back was turned this cool snake had crept in and robbed the nest that should have been my future home. I developed a fever, and spent many months lying on my back, raging against Fate and the universe. When I recovered I promised myself that when the world was sane again I would shock its smugness with my insanity. Honestly, old friend, I nurtured the darkest inclinations in my heart. I understood how men have been driven to the last extremity of the crime passionelle. It has only been by reminding myself constantly that I am an officer, and that this treacherous friend wears the uniform of an officer of an allied race, that I am able to force myself to give him the opportunity of satisfaction."

Max regarded his empty glass thought-

fully.

"You are fully determined, then, to see this thing through?"

"But yes."

"And you demand my assistance?"

"As you say."

"And when is this—this challenge to be delivered?"

"To-night, my friend. We go straight from here."

H.

In the library of a square red-brick house, with its lawns sloping down to the river, at Teddington, a tall slim young man was sorting out a collection of army forms. His clear grey eyes were alight with eagerness. He had just heard the news on the telephone of the probable Armistice on the morrow, and he hummed gaily to himself at his work. After some minutes he rang the bell, and an ancient butler entered. He looked up and said:

"Ah, Mason! I'm expecting a friend to-night to dinner. An American gentleman, Lieutenant Frazier Brandt. He may be here at any moment. Show him in."

"Very good, sir."

"What time did my wife say she would be home?"

"Madame said she might be a little late, sir. About eight o'clock. Shopping, I think, sir."

"Very good. How is my father to-day?"

"The General is pretty well, thank you, sir."

Mason had been in the family thirty-five years, and he adopted a proprietary interest in his master, even when the solicitude came from the son.

"All right, Mason, thank you\ Show Lieutenant Brandt in when he comes."

"Very good, sir."

When the butler retired the young man continued to sort his papers, but his manner was restless and preoccupied. Armistice! The war over! Pauline! Thank God! Plans and anticipations jostled each other in a joyous riot. He would be able to resign, to return to civil life. He would be able to take his wife for a real honeymoon at last. Italy, Algeria, Egypt! Then they would return and he would go back to scientific research, and they would start that wonderful home they had dreamed of and planned during the last years of horror and suspense. Home, security, Pauline, children! It seemed too wonderful to be true!...

Nearly half an hour passed amid these pleasant reveries when the butler re-entered

and announced:

"Mr. Frazier Brandt."

A thick-set young American in officer's uniform swung into the room and gripped his hand:

"Why, Hignett, I'm mighty pleased to

see you. How are you?"

"Fine, and how are you, Brandt?"

"Bully. I had some little difficulty

finding this place."

"Yes, it's my father's house, you know. He's a widower, lives here with odds and ends of relatives. Pauline and I are just camping here till we can find a place of our own."

"Well, that's fine. I'm real glad to see you, Hignett. You've heard the news, of

course ? "

"Yes, they're signing to-morrow, I'm told."

"Gosh! Isn't it wonderful? I just can't realise it. All the boys getting away back home. No more of these ghastly horrors, broken homes, broken limbs. Fancy being just a free man again, Hignett, and feeling you can do and act like a human being. I feel just crazy."

"I know. I shall go crazy to-morrow myself if it comes off. One has got so used to it one simply can't believe that there can ever be the old life again. Where and when do you think you'll be going, Brandt? I don't believe you ever told me anything

about your people, when we met in Paris."

"I have a wife and three kiddies and an old mother and two sisters, waiting for me in the little burg of Trenton, and I am going to get right back on the first boat I can crowd on to going west. Oh, it's great; it's fine! Golly! there's some good times coming to us yet, Hignett!"

Hignett stood up and laughed, and the two young men banged each other on the shoulder in sheer exuberance. They had met by pure chance at a cabaret in Paris, and had formed one of those quick war friendships, which in some cases lasted a

lifetime.

"I'm just crazy to meet your missus," said Brandt.

"I'm crazy to show her to you," replied Hignett, and he pointed at a photograph in a silver frame. "She'll be home to dinner about eight."

"My! that's fine," said Brandt, examining the photo. "It makes me feel real home-sick. Gosh! She's a peach—French,

isn't she?"

Hignett nodded.

"I met her at Amiens. She's one of the best, Brandt. Poor child! It hasn't been much of a married life for her so far. But if the Boche signs to-morrow we'll be able to make all that up."

He was holding the photograph in his hand when there was another tap on the door, and Mason entered. He was carrying two visiting cards on a tray. He approached Hignett and said:

"These two gentlemen wish to see you,

sir."

Hignett picked up the cards, examined them, and looked a little puzzled. Then he said quickly:

"Show them in, Mason."

When the butler had withdrawn he murmured:

"Anton de Thiepval! That's a queer thing, Brandt. This was the very chap who introduced me to Pauline. I didn't think he was friendly with me. I believe he was very keen on Pauline himself. I didn't get the whole story from her. I know he had been hanging about a lot. I know she liked him to a certain extent at one time. It's difficult to understand Frenchmen when it comes to their relations with women. You never can quite get the hang of how much they mean. They protest so much that their affairs are apt to lose all sense of proportion——"

The events of the next two minutes were

so sudden and so astounding, that Brandt would be likely to remember them all his

"Hullo, de Thiepval!"
The next moment without a word of

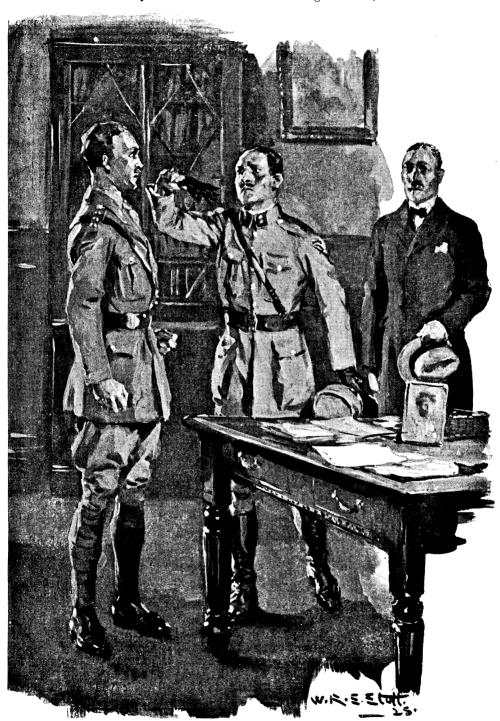


days. He saw the butler enter, announce two names, and retire. On his heels followed two very intense-looking men, one in the pale blue uniform of a French artillery officer. He heard Hignett exclaim:

warning he saw the French officer give his friend a sharp rap across the face with an open glove. He exclaimed, "Gosh!" and sprang forward as though to come to his

assistance. He felt Hignett's hand grip his forearm. He could tell by the latter's tense

expression seemed to be struggling to focus the amazing situation, and in some manner



face and clenched fists that his instincts were the same as his own, but his startled

to keep it under control. He stood very erect, and merely muttered:

"This is my father's house."

The two Frenchmen were obviously waiting for him to make some further move.

After a momentary hesitation, he said

quite calmly:

"May I ask, de Thiepval, what is the meaning of this—this unexpected attention?"

With a dramatic gesture de Thiepval declaimed:

"You are posturing, Captain Hignett. You know quite well you betrayed my trust in your honour. While my duties called me away to serve my fatherland, you ran off with the woman who was affianced to me!"

"Pauline was never affianced to you to

my knowledge."

"You lie! I loved her. She told me to wait till the war was over, till the world was sane. I trusted her. I trusted you. If the world was insane for me it was insane for you."

for you."

"Love, so far as I may judge, is not dependent upon any degree of sanity or insanity of an outside world. . . . I am sorry you take it like this, de Thiepval. It

was an open field."

"It was not an open field. You crawled in whilst my back was turned! You are, in your own language, a dirty traitor."

"I must ask you to withdraw that state-

ment."

The other officer then stepped into the breach.

"I would draw your attention, Captain Hignett, to the fact that you have been insulted by my friend, Captain de Thiepval."

"I am vividly aware of that, Major Fougeret. And I deplore the fact that your friend should have thought it necessary to behave in this manner here, in my father's house. If he wants any kind of a rough house there are other places——"

"Goody!" exclaimed Brandt suddenly. "You see what he's after, Hignett? He

wants to fight a duel."

This, surprisingly enough, had not so far occurred to Hignett. His expression was one almost of angry disgust. The situation seemed to him a little ludicrous, like a scene from an *opéra-bouffe*. People don't fight duels these days. Controlling himself as well as he could, he said:

"This is absurd. You have no right to come here and behave in this ridiculous fashion. If this were my house I'd kick you out. But my father upstairs is old and an invalid. If you wish to be rude to me

please do it outside, or anywhere you like to choose."

Fougeret bowed.

"I regard this, then, as an acceptance of my friend's challenge. May I assume that this gentleman here will act for you?"

"Oh, come now," said Brandt, in his heavy paternal voice, "let's cut all this out. To-morrow there's to be peace. Surely there's been enough blood-letting these last four years. Why can't you boys. pull yourselves together? I'm sure my friend, Hignett, wouldn't play any underhand games. He's a gentleman. My view is that there was an open field for the hand of Mrs. Hignett and you didn't just happen to pull it off, Captain. Hignett won and that's all there is to it."

"He won while my back was turned."
Fougeret turned towards Hignett, and exclaimed:

"This is an affair in which my friend's honour is at stake. I shall be glad to know what you propose to do about it."

Hignett was still maintaining his puzzled, rather contemptuous attitude. He spoke testily

"The whole thing is childish. I have no

intention of fighting a duel."

The face of de Thiepval turned a shade paler. He said acidly:

"After these four years during which England and France have been allies it pains me to have to call an English officer a coward!"

Hignett was patently uncertain how to act. His face was beginning to flush with anger, which he was at pains to control. At the same time his feelings appeared to be more bewildered by the unexpected outrage than profoundly stirred. Secure in his own sense of rectitude in the matter, conscious of the completeness of his triumph, absorbed in his own happiness, he could not but harbour a sneaking pity for de Thiepval.

As he hesitated, de Thiepval suddenly stepped forward and spat upon his uniform!

The face of Hignett underwent a strange transformation. Bewilderment, hesitation and forbearance vanished, nothing seemed to be left but the hard, cold anger of the fighting man. He turned to Brandt and said:

"Brandt, I think you understand the situation. I leave it to you to settle the details with Captain de Thiepval's friend. When you have done so, will you kindly ring the bell. The butler will show these gentlemen out."

With that he walked deliberately out of the room, closing the door very quietly after him.

Brandt was dumbfounded. When he had trundled out in a taxi to this dull-looking house at Teddington, he little expected to be suddenly whirled into the midst of a deplorable tragedy. He felt as though he had been chloroformed and awakened to find himself trajected across the centuries, or taking part in the sham posturing of a With Hignett absent he felt his powers of protestation to be useless. He listened attentively to the incisive suggestions of Fougeret.

One memory jumped vividly to the forefront of his mind. Whilst in Paris he and Hignett had visited a "Tir des Pigeons." He had discovered that his friend was a deadly shot with a revolver. He promptly rejected Fougeret's suggestion of sabres or épées. For all he knew, Hignett had never handled "the darn things." He found himself making arrangements concerning duelling pistols for dawn near a small village in the pas de Calais, the affair to take place two days later. He made a note of the details. After the officers had gone, he sought for Hignett, but the butler told him he was upstairs "reading to the general." It was half an hour before he came down. Brandt met him on the staircase.

"Gosh, Hignett," he said, "why did

you do it?"

"He spat on the King's uniform," replied Hignett quietly. "Listen, I hear my wife. Come on downstairs and I'll introduce you to her."

TTT.

AT eleven o'clock precisely the maroons went off. The King and Queen came out on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. massed band of the Guards played "Land of Hope and Glory" in the courtyard below. The great concourse, which had already assembled, cheered. But their cheers had not the fervour and the frenzy which was to be their character later in the day. Drugged by the misery of four and a half years of war, the people appeared to regard this manifestation as one further episode in the story. They had not yet grasped the full significance of it. There was nothing about the familiar figures of their King and Queen, or the grey coats of the Guards, or the drab, characterless November sky, to suggest that this was one of the most momentous days in history. Nevertheless,

the forecourt of Buckingham Palace remained throughout the day the pivot of the people's activities. From that hour they began to stream in the direction of the Palace, as though the news they had received by word of mouth, or in the newspapers, required some kind of material confirmation. When they had seen the King and Queen, or heard the solemn melodies played by the Guards, they turned to each other and exclaimed:

"My God, it's all over!"

And they went away with light hearts. By twelve o'clock the crowd was so dense that no traffic could get within half a mile of the Palace gates. And what a strange traffic it was! Every conceivable kind of motor and horse vehicle merged to this centre, weighted down by indiscriminate humanity. At the stupendous realisation all social barriers snapped. Every vehicle was a public conveyance, restricted only by it's cubic capacity. By midday the countless millions began to roar themselves hoarse in frenzied yells of—relief. For it may be said that throughout that day there was one simple emotion which stirred the multitude as though it were a unit, the emotion of intense relief. There existed no spirit of triumph, malice, recrimination—there was indeed little interest in the terms of the pact -there was only one thought expressed in the common formula of the day:

"Thank God, it's over!"

Having completed his business at the War Office, Hignett was one of the early arrivals outside the Palace gates. He too was not so far deeply affected by the significance of the affair. He was still shaken and exasperated by the events of the previous evening, still dominated by the claims of his personal preoccupations. His anger and disgust were being slowly penetrated by a greater disquiet. The previous evening's contretemps appeared so foolish, so unnecessary. The days that he had been living for, the days when he was to devote himself to Pauline, and to realise their united dream of happiness, were abruptly jeopardised at the very last moment. To have survived that awful war and then perhaps to fall to a bullet in a foolish quarrel! Or even to kill the other man! . . . And he could not tell his wife. She would not understand. somehow it did not seem quite fair to her.

He wandered down the Mall, watching the crowd. In spite of himself its exuberant quality began to excite him. He saw officers and privates walking arm in arm, veteran "brass-hats" lying back in their cars surrounded by screaming little munition girls, waving flags. Flags seemed to spring up from everywhere. And the most surprising and un-English attitude was that everyone was talking to everyone else. All class distinctions had vanished; and not only were they talking, they were talking excitedly, and laughing, cheering, and singing, and even embracing each other.

He had appointed to meet Pauline, Frazier Brandt, and two women friends of Pauline for lunch at the Barbarotti restaurant on the Embankment, and he arrived there well before his time. It was the natural instinct to share the magic of this hour with those one loved. The gay restaurant was already crowded with cheering people, the band was playing, and excited couples were dancing between the tables. New-comers were greeted with shouts of "Hurrah! hurrah!" as though by their presence they were contributing to the entertainment of this wonderful experience. Frazier Brandt was the first to appear, with two other American officers, whose names Hignett did not catch—Brandt made some light-hearted apology for bringing them. One of them was an exceptionally tall man in uniform, but wearing a shiny black topper, which he had purloined from somewhere, and which he insisted on wearing all through lunch. Pauline arrived with an even larger party, some of whom were quite unknown to her. As the restaurant was so crowded, they all had to sit where they could. But their party was quickly absorbed into the larger party. There was in effect only one party, but Hignett, Pauline and Brandt managed to sit at the same table.

They drank champagne, not that they needed stimulant, but because champagne seemed the appropriate symbol of festivity, and their eyes shone as though with the lustre of revelation. They toasted each other, and life, and men, and strangers, and even ideas. Suddenly two of them would rise and dance, or grip the hands of strangers.

At their table sat Dr. Caswell, the well-known osteopath, an elderly man with horn-rimmed spectacles and the manners of a

judge.

"Watch them, Hignett," he said between the courses. "The readjustment of the rhythm of life has already begun. It is a notorious fact that after any such great upheaval the primary instinct of every people is to dance. For years now everyone will be dancing mad. When the street-bells have been jangled, out of tune and harsh, and all the ordered rhythms blown to pieces, the vital energy that survives instantly starts to re-establish the rhythms. War is a cacophony, but life is rhythm."

The tables were cleared, but the dancing went on. Some went and others came. They wanted to be everywhere at once, to meet old friends and to make new ones, to feel the warm vibration of human life around them, to know that everyone regarded his fellow-creature as a friend. Hignett was dancing with his wife, their bodies swaying in perfect unison. Suddenly he thought:

"Rhythm! . . . rhythm! and in twenty-

four hours I may be dead."

"Darling," she whispered, "let's ask them all out to Teddington to-night. Everyone. Let us make what you call—a night of it."

To-night? Well, why not? There was no reason why one shouldn't dance to-night. "Make a night of it!" By all means. Ask everyone. Light up the old hall with youth and gaiety, and let his old father rejoice in the sight.

"Why, yes, Pauline, you are a genius! We will ask them all."

Hignett was seated talking to Pauline, who was breathlessly discussing the arrangements for the evening, when he was startled by the abrupt approach of two figures towards the table. It was de Thiepval and his friend! De Thiepval's eyes were glowing with a strange light. He appeared to be on the point of tears. Hignett jumped up, but the French officer gave him a ceremonious bow, then turning to Pauline, he took her hand and kissed it.

"Madame," he said, and his voice was hoarse with emotion, "you once said to me, 'When the world was sane.' Now . . . now I understand you."

Then he turned to Hignett and held out both his arms.

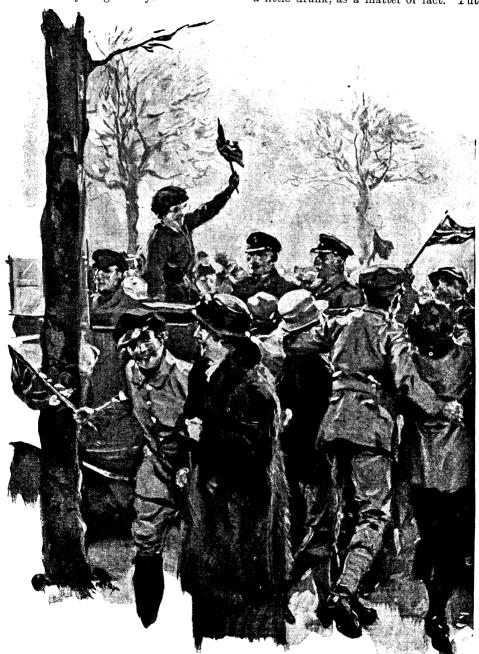
"Captain, forgive me. I have—I have seen a people sane. Everything false suddenly falls away from me. Madame was right, and I was wrong. I cannot—I cannot—you understand—forgive me for my rudeness——"

Hignett felt a lump come into his throat. For a moment he could not speak. Then he took the other's hand in a firm grasp, patted his shoulders, and said in that shy English manner:

"My dear chap!"

There was something childlike and a little pathetic about de Thiepval as he bravely tried to control his tears. "I did not know—I did not think—there could ever be such a day, such a spirit. One sees everything clearly."

Come and have a drink with us, and your friend too. I've forgotten his name. I'm a little drunk, as a matter of fact. Put it



"All class distinctions had vanished."

Frazier Brandt had been watching this reconciliation. He suddenly put his arm around the Frenchman and exclaimed:

"De Thiepval, old man, that's fine!

there. We're all friends now—eh? No more wars, no more troubles, all good friends—eh? Waiter, another bottle of Pol Roger."

The wine was brought, and the toasts started again.

"To France! To England! To America!"

"How will they be feeling in Berlin?"
"Relieved I should think. Poor devils!"

"Poor devils!"

Pauline suddenly stood up, her beautiful

vans. One gets there. Then one either gets back or does not get back. There are beds and shake-downs, and sofas, and some food, and much dancing, and all goodwill, and love, and friendship. Anyone who says he is my friend comes back to Teddington, if only to prove that the world is sane. Will you come, Anton?"



eyes aglow. She raised her glass to the two Frenchmen.

"My dear Anton, my dear Max, you must both come to-night to Teddington. We make a night of it."

"Teddington! But how-"

"There are no 'hows.' There is Dr. Caswell's car, and some taxis, or munition

De Thiepval bowed solemnly. "Whatever the goddess decrees."

IV.

The impromptu party arranged by Pauline on Armistice night at General Hignett's house at Teddington consisted of about thirty-five people, of whom no less than

fifteen stayed the night. The telephone was kept busy, and the guests came and went in bewildering fashion. The old general himself dressed and came down, even donning his Boer War medals. He did not join the party at dinner, but he appeared soon after for a short period, and insisted upon being presented to the young officers, to each of whom he made a ceremonious little speech. formally thanking them for their services to the allied cause. The irresponsible gaiety of the evening seemed to puzzle him a little.

A gramophone was already emitting the strains of a fox-trot, and with it the glamour of Armistice Day seemed to take on renewed Young men and young women, strong of body and keen of mind, and the gloomy menace of four and a half years abruptly removed by the stroke of a pen! To be free to make one's life as one desired! How simple seemed the claims of personal love and personal success unhampered by the grinding machinery of State control!

The young people glanced over their shoulders to admire the wonderful diamonds of Madame Beneventuros. She was the wife of an Argentine senator and cattle king. Her diamonds were famous. Hignett had met her husband over Government business. and as Beneventuros had to go to Barcelona for a few days on family affairs, he and Pauline had asked Madame Beneventuros to stay with them. These gleaming gems seemed symbolic of the unexplored riches of this newly awakened world.

De Thiepval had quickly succumbed to the spirit of the day. His jealousy had evaporated. His spirits were as gay as they had formerly been morose. He danced with Pauline, and in a quiet corner of the hall spoke freely of the quarrel and of his contrition.

By midnight Frazier Brandt was garrulous. He had drunk more champagne than he was accustomed to, and the result had heightened his natural bias towards kindliness, good-fellowship, and universal love. He was disposed to embrace everyone, men and women alike, and tell them what fine and noble specimens of humanity they were. There had been a halt in the evening's activities, and the whole company had reassembled in the dining-room, where more drinks and sandwiches were being served. It was at this moment that his garrulousness received an inspiration. He got on to his legs and made a speech.

'Ladies and gentlemen, I love you all.

This is the greatest day in the history of the world. The greatest day, believe me. will come to know it and look back on it. What we have to do, my good friends, is to keep it up. Keep up Armistice Day for ever, and ever, and ever. D'you get me? And it's not only in the big things, it's in the little things. Armistice Day! No more wars, no more envy, jealousy or malice. No more petty quarrels. Just all good friends, free . . . free men, free women, loving one another. Now I'm going to put across a proposition. All of us in this room, we've determined there's going to be no more war, no more bloodshed. There was very nearly-no, I can't tell you, it's a personal affair; anyway, I guess it's not up to me to talk about it. But, listen, I want to suggest that right here and now all we officers, and any others of you who've got guns, stilettos, or any other implements. put the whole lot into a sack, and that we then process down the garden to the boathouse and solemnly commit the whole kiboosh to the bosom of your ancient River Thames. And we make a prayer and say:

"'Oh, Thames, here is our burnt-offering. See to it that there is no more war, no more strife, but that henceforth all men live in peace and goodwill towards each other."

Brandt's speech somehow fitted into the mood of the party. Everyone laughed, clapped, or cheered. Hignett was specially enthusiastic, although he was laughing too. A sheet was procured, and every man who had a weapon of any sort deposited it in the heap, which was then tied up. Then the whole party, including the women, some in overcoats and macintoshes, and some even carrying umbrellas, formed into a procession, and, to the strains of "The Marseillaise," played on combs and whistled, they marched down to the boathouse. Hignett took the bundle, and, leaning over the edge of the platform, he said:

"Oh, Father Thames, at the inspiration of our bright young friend from America we commit this bundle to your keeping. We are fed up to the teeth with war and strife, and envy and jealousy. We pray you see to it that these things never happen again. Let the world remain free, and simple, and pure in heart as it has been on this Armistice Dav. Amen!"

The bundle went plomp into the dark The action produced on the whole company an almost involuntary effect of awe, then they turned and marched solemnly back to the house to the strains of "Land of Hope and Glory." . . . And still the dance went on.

Sometimes they would break up into little groups and talk, but for the most part dancing held sway.

Madame Beneventuros retired at half-past one.

It was not until nearly 3.30 that the rest of the party, with final embraces and benedictions, eventually retired to their various shake-downs and sleeping quarters, and it was not until they lay down that each member realised his or her extreme fatigue. For within a quarter of an hour or so all were in profound sleep.

In order to follow the amazing event which happened within the next hour and a half it is necessary to visualise roughly the plan of the ground floor of General Hignett's house.

The main entrance door, which was in the centre, led into a small vestibule, serving no other purpose than that of a buffer between the front door and the lobby which led into the large central hall. This lobby was about fifteen feet long and eight feet wide, and had one door leading into a cloak-room on the right. The other rooms on this floor, the dining-room and the Lshaped drawing-room on the west side and the library and billiard-room on the east side, all had doors leading into the central hall. In line with the entrance door and the lobby was a staircase which led up to a balcony on the north side, overlooking the hall. On the west side, but separated from the main balcony, and entered by a separate staircase, was another small section of balcony. This was the part occupied by the General and his personal servants. The only three guests sleeping on the ground floor were the two French officers in the library, and an American—the same who had paraded the streets of London in a topper—who was comfortably ensconced on a lounge in the billiard-room. All the others were scattered in various rooms upstairs or above the garage.

By half-past four the whole household was in a profound sleep, with the possible exception of Hignett, whose mind was still semi-active with the events of the extraordinary day. He was half dreaming—pleasant riotous dreams interlarded with airs of fox-trots and jumbled phrases, and a sense of the promise of some newly awakened happiness. When suddenly the penumbra of his mind was pierced by a loud scream. He jumped out of bed and

ran to the door. The balcony and hall were in complete darkness, but he was vaguely conscious of movement. There was the sound of a banging door, a rustle, and a dim vision of something white, and then, pitched on an hysterical note, the voice of Madame Beneventuros:

"He's got my diamonds!"

He called out at random, "All right, Madame!" and groped for the switch. For some moments he could not find it. During that interval he heard the louder screams of Madame Beneventuros, and the opening of other doors, and voices calling out:

"What is it?"

When he got to the switch it only lighted the balcony, the switch for the hall being below. The hall, however, was dimly visible. He saw two figures, one lurking by the lobby entrance, the other hurrying across the hall. They were both masked.

Hignett's mind came out of its torpid condition with a violent jerk. A crowd of small facts impressed themselves upon him at the same instant. One salient feature was that the men were armed, for he saw the tall American standing by the billiardroom door, holding up his hands. He was covered by the revolver of the man from the lobby. He could also hear the muffled throb of an automobile engine outside the front porch. The other man was moving with professional deftness in the direction of a cabinet that held some gold plate and gems. He hardly appeared to be in a hurry.

"This is a carefully arranged plot by highly skilled expert thieves. They came for the diamonds of Madame Beneventuros, but this gentleman thinks he might have a few extras as well. We'll see—"

Hignett made an instinctive spring on to the staircase, and an equally instinctive spring back, for a bullet grazed his elbow. He scrambled towards his bedroom only to bump into Pauline.

"Get back, darling, get back! It's all right," he said, and then uttered a curse. He had gone back to the bedroom for his revolver. And suddenly the ironic truth struck him. Every single weapon of defence had been consigned to the gentle care of "Father Thames"! Of all those men in the house, not one had a weapon. These men must have been watching their every movement. It was a damnable situation. He heard other cries and screams, and crept back to the balcony. Quite a number of men were there in dressing-gowns and

pyjamas, all helpless! For one of the thieves had his revolver covering the whole scene of operations, whilst the other calmly began to remove the contents of the cabinet into a large black bag. And then in a flash the whole bizarre business had reached a crisis of tragedy.

Without observing how she got there, Hignett suddenly observed Pauline at the foot of the stairs rushing in the direction of the thief and crying out, "No, no!"

He sensed in an instant the cause of her onset. In the cabinet were the jewels and little trinkets which had belonged to her mother and which had been temporarily placed there. His heart gave a throb of dread as he rushed after her. He sprang down the stairs in two bounds, but even that was not quick enough to avert the tragedy. The one thief continued to pack, but the other fired, and the bullet went clean through the heart of—de Thiepval!

The French officer had made a spring from the library door! Hignett caught Pauline in his arms and turned, and as he did so he was aware of a new element in the conflict. For there was the ping of a rifleshot followed by a scream of pain from the man who had fired. In spite of the danger of his position with his beloved burden, Hignett could not help but turn, and the truth became evident to him at a glance. Up in his own section of balcony the General was busy with an old Lee-Metford rifle, such as was used during the Boer War. He was taking cover behind the projections in the balustrade, and calmly proceeding to snipe the enemy.

At this unexpected onslaught both the marauders dashed into the lobby and through the front door, each leaving a trail of blood. A car was heard to start. They had the diamonds, it was true, but little else,

and each was wounded. Some of the men rushed after them, others hastened to the telephone. The police were informed and a doctor sent for, although all knew, alas! that the doctor's services were a mere matter of form. De Thiepval had died in the gallant way that he would have chosen. They placed his body in one of the bedrooms and, setting two candles, Pauline weeping a little, knelt and prayed for his soul. . . . With the raw light of dawn came the news that the thieves had been captured, and a bedraggled company met over tea and coffee and rolls and discussed the night's adventure.

The old gentleman had been badly shaken, but he insisted that he wished to see all the young officers and speak to them.

"It's an order from G.H.Q.," said Hignett, shrugging his shoulders, and he went upstairs, the others following him. The old man was sitting up in his bed; his eyes were very bright, and his lips moving jerkily. The men stood around the bed, and he looked at them, nodded and smiled. Then he said:

"Where is that other young Frenchman?" Hignett coughed. "He—he fell in the conflict, sir."

The old General nodded slowly. Almost inaudibly, as if talking to himself, he suddenly said:

"You young men! . . ."

Then he raised himself and called out as though it were a military command:

"The strong man may lay down his arms, but he does not throw them away."

He lay back as though exhausted after that, and smiled once more.

"You young men . . . you young men

He closed his eyes, but his lips continued their jerky movement. . . .

A CHOICE.

If a great angel came to me and said,
"Thou shalt not see to-morrow's sun arise;
Choose, among all the beauteous sights of earth,
The two most loved, before I blind thine eyes,"

Then would I answer, "I have loved the clouds,
The trees, and mountains, every flower that blows,
But to my longing eyes, ere darkness falls,
Give but a bluebell wood and a wild rose."

MR.BUFFUM'S BREAKAWAY Hugh de Sélincourt

R. BUFFUM at fifty decided to settle down comfortably. Lucia, his niece (come an Eton cropper the only cropper she was likely to come), decided otherwise. Niece lured him to take his first steps along the primrose

She it was who had taught Mr. Buffum to dance; she it was who decreed that he should appear on a polished dancing floor and move to the strains of that band which up till now he had only heard by wireless in his drawing-room.

She drove him from Sussex in her sports They dined at Dorking at 6.45. Surrender for one night was the agreement -to be redelivered safe and sure as milk

in the morning.

Towards the close of dinner Mr. Buffum ventured a remonstrance: "The drive, dear Lucia, has been fast but pleasant; also our little dinner here . . ."

"Less lip-work, Old Man," she was swift to interrupt. "Lap up your coffee. A compact is a compact. I've tickets for a show. We sup at the Savoy, and dance,

don't forget it, dance."

"In my young days," he mildly began once more, but her "Shall we finish our talk on the road?" extinguished his mild beginning. He found himself swiftly packed by her side in the two-seater, a lighted cigar placed deftly between his lips, like a baby's dummy. Between admiration at her go and terror at her going, he managed to inform her that in his young days they did not pack a month's entertainment into one evening. A joy ride or a dinner or a theatre or a supper or a dance. He roared the ors in time to hoots of her klaxon at an impeding lorry. She may have heard; but the pats on his knee were not too reassuring, as she shouted in front of her: "You deserve a change."

They tore on through the darkness. Touched sixty on the bye-pass. "These abominable cross-roads make you crawl."

Still breathless from the drive, with her arm snuggled in his in a taxi, Mr. Buffum stared in front of him as the driver dodged through the glaring streets. He had passed being nervous; it was no use: what was to be was to be. He was resigned to his fate, anticipating hopefully rest at the

theatre. Too hopefully.

The play, niece-chosen, was not restful. The theatre was connected in Mr. Buffum's mind with prodigious scenic displays of Shakespeare, or mild sentimental comedies, or the earnest gloomy drama which represents Life. He took his pleasures seriously and a little thinly, and gave them and his business up without any fierce pang when he retired to the country after the War. He had never seen a slick crook play.

From the moment, very soon after the rise of the curtain, when a gentleman came noiselessly down the stairs, peered round the corner into the bar lounge, stealthily took a heavy brass candlestick from the chimney-piece, advanced silently to attack a man behind a newspaper, fought him, struck him down, was climbing out of the window, only to be shot by the fellow on the ground, shamming stunned-Mr. Buffum

listened with mouth ajar and watched with bulging eyes—"quite taken out of himself," as they say in his part of the country.

Blood dripped through the ceiling. The heroine was doped—he could have warned her in a loud voice against that bluff rogue of a landlady; the heroine's brother, strapped in a chair—oh, a gallant lad!—had a knife drawn across his bare white throat before his wounded father's eyes (Mr. Buffum could have screamed with horror), and yet they would not tell where the incriminating papers were hidden.

And the tick-tick-tick of the infernal machine placed in the clock made Mr. Buffum sweat with anxiety. What an ass, for all his charm, that young Secret Service man was to be taken in by the arch-scoundrel's assumption of heart failure when he had the whole game in his hands! And the comic entry of the honest, ridiculous barman to the rescue.

As the curtain fell Mr. Buffum protested to his niece, "Of course, my dear, that is not Art."

"It got you all right, Old Man. Now for the Savoy. Trip it swiftly but with care."

He had renounced argument; but in the taxi he was obliged to suggest, very gently, that perhaps his *début* should be made in slightly less grand and glorious surroundings.

"Not a word," his niece sternly replied.
"Old Man, you're FOR it."

Thoughts of hurry for the last train to his suburban home, a twenty minutes' sleepy ride in a railway carriage, elder sister in the opposite corner, gaunt and upright and rather jerkily intense. A slow quarter of an hour's walk up a steepish hill to a dark house, a glass of milk and a biscuit . . . bed at 12.30—very late . . . but the drama improved the mind. This sort of thing hadn't somehow occurred to him. Many things had not occurred to him. Modesty made him feel they were not quite in his For one thing, it never occurred to him that anyone could much like him. The face he saw every morning in the glass when he shaved did not strike him as prepossessing. For another, it had never occurred to him to order champagne—at a public dinner it circulated; but with his own lips actually to order a bottle-well, it had never occurred to him. He never pretended to be dashing.

The taxi had barely stopped before the

door was opened by a magnificent official. Lucia tripped gaily in with the air of a Peri returning to Paradise. Mr. Buffum fumbled in suddenly shrunk pockets with a suddenly swollen hand for a half-crown, as Niece disappeared behind great swinging doors, leaving him alone. He ought to have told her that he had never been to the Savoy before, except once to lunch in the Grill Room, which was different. Still, a man of fifty, he boldly supposed, could walk in where other men walked. He should not have let the dear child assume he knew his way about. She was nowhere to be No doubt it was unbelievable that a sane gentleman of fifty should not quite know what to do when supping at the Savoy. He looked round bashfully countless ladies, old and young, sitting about, obviously not simply waiting for friends, but showing to everybody else (to himself in particular) how familiar they were with scenes of grandeur: so familiar, to judge by their manner, as almost to be bored. Men, young and old, strolled about at their complete ease. Every eye bored his shyness like a gimlet, and they all knew to a man, to a woman, to a boy, to a girl, that he, poor old Buffum, had never taken supper after the theatre, let alone supper at the Savoy and DANCE.

Some kind young thing would be whispering brightly in his ear: "Best get home to your milk and biscuit, old dear. Time you were gone to bye-byes, don't you think?"

So he moved on, to be confronted by apparently hordes of knee-breeched lackeys in grey plush coats with epaulettes: august creatures, obviously placed there to warn off undesirable persons by haughty glances, and in no wise to welcome and assist any respectable but too shy visitor. Who was he, poor old Buffum, to venture into such grandeur? No wonder they eyed him with hostile disdain. He didn't even know whether he should remove his hat. He kept moving slowly forward. They might think he meant to get somewhere if he kept moving. Slowly one stair after anotherthen a level space—to more stairs. He must not move too fast or he would reach somewhere he did not want to be. Just -keep-moving-Niece would surely come and find him. No, not down those stairs into that vast, brilliantly lighted room. He halted, dazed, then a stroke of genius came to him and he turned slowly round and moved slowly back.

The epauletted flunkeys kept disdainful eyes upon him. Crowned heads incognito, earls, millionaires, magnates, ministers of quick steps behind, he turned to see Lucia, fresh as though she had taken a bath—and hear:



the Crown, frequented this place: not simple souls like Buffum.

"Once more up and once more down," thought Mr. Buffum, "and then I think I must really give it up."

He was moving painfully back towards the brilliant lights when, on a flurry of "Oh, forgive me, Old Man, for letting you wander. Thought you knew the place. This way, dear. Now then, Thomas," she addressed a knee-breeched flunkey, "what about showing the gentleman the cloakroom? Just leave your things. You'll find me here."

The flunkey deigned to become a human being.

"This way, sir. You looked so perfectly

sir." Very flattering and very pleasant Mr. Buffum found his attentions. He began to feel almost human himself, though,



"'Now then, Thomas,' she addressed a knee-breeched flunkey, 'what about showing the gentleman the cloak-room?'"

at home, if you'll pardon my saying so. . . . From the Colonies, no doubt. If you should wish to wash your hands. Yes—the ticket,

as he washed his face and brushed his hair; he could not help feeling a little muddled (such is the force of habit) and uncertain as to whether he were finishing one day or beginning the next. He had to collect his wits to withstand the temptation of undressing and going to bed somewhere, as he was accustomed to do at this hour of the day. He managed it successfully—did not even undo his tie, though his fingers wandered to its ends—and he gave the flunkey a well-earned shilling for his humanity as he was redelivered, washed and brushed up, to his waiting niece. He leaned over her to say with a sad little smile:

"I fear I'm what you call a dud at this,

my dear."

"What foolishness!" she cried, and, fondly taking his arm, she conjured him into the gorgeous banqueting-hall, in the centre of which shone dazzling the immense dance floor.

While she urged and guided him among innumerable tables, he pondered as to whether she really supposed he was going to trust his length and shyness to that polished surface. Merely to sit in that gorgeous room at such an hour and to eat would try his small stock of savoir vivre to the uttermost. To dance! He gave a wan smile.

"I like to be well in it. Right by the band."

After interminable progress among tables and suppers, just as he was mastering his step, so to speak, and was ready to go on indefinitely, he found a bowing waiter holding back a chair, and seated himself—as the band struck up, not a derisive salute at his at last winning through to a seat at a supper-table, but a simple popular foxtrot.

"You order," he sighed, waving away the enormous menu. He listened to a never-ending list of edibles strung off without hesitation, while he watched, awed and fascinated, the floor fill with couples. His arm was squeezed.

"Isn't this fun, now? Isn't this jolly?"
He looked into bright eyes—and nodded
the lie he could not utter.

"Horrid people, mostly. But a perfect supper, a perfect band, a perfect floor. Oh, what fun to have you here at last!"

With amazing swiftness she chose the wine from the head waiter.

"Just wait till we warm up to it a bit, and then . . ."

She squeezed his arm again.

Would it be kinder to tell her at once or a little later that in no circumstances whatever could he be induced to move about on that treacherous polished surface, both for her sake and for his own? He could not take his eyes off its gleam. It had the same effect upon his mind as has a heaving sea upon the mind of a bad sailor, with a crossing in prospect. Crossing the Channel is a painful necessity. Dancing is a pleasure—a pleasure!—he smiled a ghostly smile at the grim humour of it. He felt too stiff somehow in the throat to swallow much. Cold soup, ah! He drank it down, then wondered, should he have used a spoon? No. Lucia was sipping.

"Ah, the bubbly!" she cried, watching the glasses filled. "A toast! Here's to out first dance on a decent floor!"

Little light stuff—cool and refreshing—

he tipped his hastily down.

"Good man! Good man!" She tapped his arm and filled his glass again, which he hastily emptied—she liked him to drink; in that way, at least, he could give her pleasure—to find courage to break to her the entire impossibility of venturing on that slippery, treacherous shininess even to please her—at his age and with his upbringing. "Oh, here they are!" she cried. "George and his sister!"

Mr. Buffum, to his amazement, saw a youngish man and a youngish woman who, though not appearing actually shy, yet moved with a certain diffidence of manner, suggesting that they had not lived and moved and had their being since infancy at the Savoy.

He instantly liked them in consequence, and was pleased that they sat at the next table, listening soon without arrogance to the sister's confession that it was good at last to meet him, after hearing so much of him from Lucia; so anxious to dance with him, too: a natural sense of rhythm, she'd heard; enjoying it, too, more than any boy.

That penetrated the rosy mist that rises from harassed nerves, champagne-drenched.

"Who? Me?" he gasped. "Dance?"
"You don't suppose," Lucia interposed,
beaming, "I'd ask you out only to dance
with me! Too poor fun! Enlaced with a
mere relation!"

Oh, he was for it: indubitably for it!

He looked wildly round, contemplating flight, but he was too hemmed in; moreover, the knee-breeched flunkeys would collar him and lead him back, even if he escaped from the army of waiters, which was unlikely, aided as they would be by all the smart athletic young men, who owned the place, judging by their smiling air of proprietorship.

to be saved from the fate of dancing first

with a stranger on the shining treachery.

"Come, my dear! Come! On your

He snatched his niece's hand.

head be it!"

Mr. Buffum emptied the bottle into his glass, and the glass down his throat, remembering too late that wine-induced unsteadiness would not assist his steps on that treacherous surface, shining with a mighty goblin grin before him.



"I am so looking forward to dancing with you," he heard breathed into his right ear, horrified. He could only scratch that right ear in response; less expressive than a donkey's twitch of an ear. His state of mind was so agonising that he found relief in knowing that it was utter nonsense to suppose that any minute a magic button might be pressed and his clothes be removed, leaving him bare as in a bad dream in the ball-room. That humiliation, at least, he would be spared.

And George was moving back his chair: horror on horror. Mr. Buffum plunged,

of his partner, and then he caught the rhythm and they moved off.... The Atlantic liner was launched: the liner floated. But the liner, she's a lady: and Mr. Buffum was a modest, almost too modest, gentleman.

What was this? He could hardly believe his feet. He was moving like a ship over a calm sea, the music a favouring breeze in the sails. Smoothly, easily, effortlessly, he glided on, a slow smile widening on his broad and happy face.

"Pack up all your cares and woe. . . . Off we go. . . . Bye-bye, Blackbird. . . ."

And he had formerly enjoyed scuffling along, carpet rugs rolled back on dull boards, to the tune of a mere machine.

"Oh, I say," he whispered to his partner in a trance; and later, on the same ecstatic

note, "I do love it."

On and on they moved. Bumping into others! Ridiculous. Feet shooting out! Absurd. Stop and sway gently to the captivating rhythm, then smoothly forward

along the clear space ahead.

"Bye-bye, Blackbird." No eccentric trickery of hip- or foot-work for him. Let those who will Charleston. Let those who will Black Bottom. Leave such fidgety antics for the nimble or the blasé. Enough to move rhythmically on and on, the old fox suavely trotting in the mutual infection of the measure.

"You dance like an angel," he whispered.

"Marion dances like an angel's whisker!" she replied, laughing, thrilled by his enormous enjoyment.

"It doesn't stop at twelve, does it?"

he asked on a stab of consternation.

"Not till two!"

His clasp on her tightened. "Oh, good," he joyously sighed. He noticed a tallish thin man with a rather nice face, about his own age, dancing in a kind of side hall. Something familiar about him—danced unmistakably well, without mannerism; he turned and, revolving, looked again—to find the side hall was a mirror—he had caught a glimpse of Mr. Augustus Buffum with a stranger's eye for the first time in his life. Jubilation such as he had never known sang within his modest bosom. He could almost have said that the fellow in the mirror looked distinguished.

The dance ended. Seated at the table again, Mr. Buffum beckoned kindly but firmly to the wine waiter and ordered another bottle of champagne without a qualm. The moment the band struck up another fox-trot, he politely and at once engaged Miss Marion, gallantly restraining his wish to cry out: "Hurry up! Now hurry up! Don't for any's sake waste time, muddling and chatting and loitering."

He was impatient to be off. He was for it. Oh, he was for it! And Miss Marion would not or could not hurry—must remove a lace scarf which was entangled in something; must make unnecessary remarks to Lucia—(Dear me! Dear me! Come on!). He could not truthfully say she was loitering, but oh, so slow to his boyish impatience.

Ah, at last . . .

Niece was right—Miss Marion danced like an angel's—what was her horrid cocktail joke? And Niece was right again: though exaggerated in her statement—the modern way of putting things—"enlaced with a mere relation."

"How many times," the band broke into a sudden burst of indiscreet song, asking with charming American candour:

"How many times has a certain feeling Troubled you so that you hit the ceiling?"

"Well," Mr. Buffum blandly smiled to himself, "troubled is hardly the word I should choose." And he pretended not to hear these cogent questions, enunciated with an almost ferocious clarity:

"I'd feel bad if you kissed too many; But I'd feel worse if you'd not kissed any."

"I wonder, would you? Because I've not, you know," his thought brooded cheerfully, as he moved along with Miss Marion in a swoon of delight, smiling through a rosy haze at Lucia dancing near with George.

Two hundred and fifty pounds saved every year! Why so much? Say ten pounds every month for one such evening: £120 from £250 left £130. The calculations did themselves in his happy head. Dinner and dance all the evening. Vistas opened, as he glided and revolved in a serenely voluptuous dream. Something deliciously never-ending about this ease of movement, wafted along together by the music's compelling beat. Miss Marion was enjoying it too, exquisitely docile to his lead, firm and light on her feet.

"If I were a youngster!" he thought.
"My goodness!" And added in dreamy exaltation, "I doubt if I could love dancing with her more!" And in defiance of modesty, "Or if anybody could!"

He hoped that no more horrid disturbing questions would be chanted in his ear. Some things were better left floating softly in the air than thundered in blank words. "But I'll not miss quite so much in future," he smiled to assure himself, and he

"I enjoy things in my own retiring quiet

way, you know."

observed to his partner:

His shoulder was perceptibly pressed as her answer came with quiet emphasis:

"I should say you do!"

Mr. Buffum began to blossom. Radiant plans flitted gaily through his mind. Many things occurred to him, the least and most explicit of which was the resolve that he would learn to waltz by next month—for he found himself walking sadly back to his seat to the strains of an alluring waltz,

enlaced with a mere relation but might dance with George. Never before in his life had he felt at such happy, care-free ease with a girl—felt simply how dear a



the new manner of dancing which he had not yet mastered.

Niece was winning at a canter. Only one more dance he had with her, and not wholly for her sake that she might not be

girl was and nice and different. Movement with her was cumulative delight. Everything in him sang with happiness. The hours of the evening sped. All too soon the end came; and Lucia, anxious, of course, to wish George good night, was

"Two taxis: you take Marion. We'll drop them and I'll go on with you to the

How it happened Mr. Buffum never knew. It had never occurred to him that such a thing could happen. But he found his arm was somehow enclosing her in the taxi, and he heard his voice saying:

"My dear, I've never enjoyed an evening so much in all my life." And she nestled up to him and said, "I am so glad," and then, to his delight and to his astonishment, he found that he was, with all the naturalness and simplicity in the world, giving her a kiss. And she kissed him and saidthere was no mistaking the words-"You are a darling!" The words entirely took Mr. Buffum's breath away. A darling! She meant it. It had never occurred to him. He sat in rapturous silence till Marion left and he was joined by Niece, who took command.

Back in the sports car—racing through the empty lighted streets of the town, out into the dark country, behind their own raying stream of light-faster and ever faster—the pace lulled the rosy dream of the evening. What an evening!

Suddenly Mr. Buffum felt he must make confession.

"Lucia," he shouted, looking at the intent, stern face of the driver, "if ever my name should be mentioned between you and that dear young lady, I should like you to assure her that my intentions . . ." The sudden slowing of the car stopped him: the words were taken from him. The car was nearly brought to a standstill that no emphasis might be lost in what she said:

Don't worry your dear old mind about intentions, honourable or dishonourable. Marion's a brick. Not out to hook a husband. Not a bit. She loved it. Simply loved it. Thinks you a perfect lamb. So do I. Just enjoy it as you've made us all enjoy it and leave it at that! Cut out those frousty notions. . . . Enjoy it. Leave it at that."

"I've not left it at that!" he blurted out like a naughty boy.

"What do you mean?"

"I've arranged, subject to your convenience, another. Only, I thought, dinner next time-more time for dancing."

"Oh," she cried, "you are priceless!" And treading on the gas, shoe hard down on the floorboard, she shot the car off into the night.

COMPANY COMING.

HOUSE is such a lovely thing When ready for a guest, It has a look of blossoming Into its brightest best, An almost human dignity As being fitly dressed.

The firelight—a gay, filled vase, A table spread for tea, A bed turned back—a waiting chair— Are gracious things to see. I love to watch a house that is Expecting company.

And I have rubbed my wares to-day Until they glow with light; My heart has wings-my feet have moved Like swallows in their flight. O, I can scarcely wait at all For one who comes to-night.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

THE GERMAN SONG

By H. C. BAILEY

● ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

R. FORTUNE feels the cold. The frosty trees slid sparkling by and he huddled into the corner of the car. His fur coat rose to his ears and from

time to time he moaned faintly.

The Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department had snatched him from his breakfast to look at some bones found in the garden of the Tax Collector of Sandton which the Department wished to ascribe to the Collector's vanished mother-in-law. And the bones were not human. So you behold him on that cold November morning, miserable and lavender pink, with the Hon. Sidney Lomas and Superintendent Bell in a car which was seldom doing more than forty.

"Are you all right, sir?" said Bell anxiously, for Mr. Fortune had mouned again.
"No. No. I'm not dead. Why bring

me in a hearse?"

Therewith the car slowed to a walk, writhed this way and that through the narrow tortuous streets of Midworth and

stopped at the police station.

Mr. Fortune in his fur coat is not agile. His wife has compared him to a baby learning to walk. He rolled into the police station to find the Chief Constable in disrespectful laughter under the glacial stare of Lomas's eyeglass. "So it wasn't Ma-in-law! Bits of old museum stuff? I like that!"

"Thanks so much," Reggie sighed, and held out to the fire one small foot.

"Wouldn't like another job, Lomas?" the Chief Constable chuckled. "Might get you another good laugh, you know. This has just come in." He read out a message. "Burglary at Watlings last night. Sir Harold Exon's collection of jewellery stolen. What do you know about that? Perhaps you could find it in the garden. Like Ma-in-law."

Thus frivolously Mr. Fortune was thrust into a memorable case.

Lomas looked at the Chief Constable as a head master looks at an offensive small boy and took the message. "Yes, I think it is rather beyond you," he said. "If Exon's had an efficient burglar, some intelligence will be required. Watlings. That's his place in the Weald, isn't it?"

0

"Yes. Back of nowhere. I was just

going up."

"You'd better come along in our car."
"Why should he?" Reggie moaned.
"He'd find it quicker to walk."

"Don't be peevish, Reginald. You may be superfluous, but you know it's the sort of

case you like to be in."

"Inever like to be in a case." Reggie was shrill. "I hate cases. You took me away from my breakfast, and now I shan't have any lunch." But he was put back in the car. He sank into his coat moaning. "Who is this Cræsus that collects jewellery and keeps it somewhere off the map?"

"My dear chap, everybody knows Exon."
I never know the fellows everybody

knows. It isn't amusing."

"I'm afraid you're showing off, Reginald. He's the fellow who gave his collection of jade to the nation. Hence the knighthood. But he's quite a dear old thing. His father was the big antique dealer of the time. Henry Exon gave up the shop and collected for the love of it. Pretty well everything. China, miniatures, jewels, silver. His flat in town is like the Arabian Nights. I've dined there. But they say he keeps the best of his things down at his country place."

"I've heard there was some wonderful stuff at Watlings," said the Chief Constable with reverence. "Silver and such-like. American millionaires come down to see it. I didn't know he went in for jewels. A collection of jewellery! Sounds luscious,

doesn't it?"

"I know he had the Melrose candlestick: but he sold that to some man in Boston. He bought those old gold things they dug up in France last year. Snapped 'em up when the Louvre people were late with a bid."

Reggie stirred. "You appeal to my

better feelings, Lomas."

"That sort of collection—just the thing to catch the eye of some of the international crooks," said Bell.

"Yes. Yes. The trained taste is indi-

cated," Reggie murmured.

Watlings was a timbered farmstead. It had been made into a little country house with all the comforts, and still looked as if Queen Anne had built it. Sir Henry Exon, a little elegant old man, white of hair, with white moustache and imperial on a skin of amber, was in the period too. His clothes, rather loose, rather a brighter blue than age now chooses, pink cuffs half hiding beautiful hands, the picturesque formality of his manners, made harmony with his linen-fold panelling and the furniture in green damask and gold.

Lomas and he were ambassadorial in salutations. There were ceremonious introductions. "And now," said Sir Henry, "now you will permit me to explain my misfortune. I had here a small collection of old goldsmiths' work. Some Etruscan, some Greek, a little of the Merovingian period, and the Celtic culture and several things of the Viking age and rather more mediæval work."

"Yes. Yes. All museum pieces?"

Reggie murmured.

"I may say that, I believe," said Sir Henry with some disdain, "I have no interest in things of merely commercial value. There must be artistic quality or historic significance. I should venture to think that in its small scope my little collection was not surpassed in Europe." He smiled. "I dare not speak of America."

"Yes. Priceless. Yes. But speakin' as a thief, the value was the value of the gold

in the meltin'-pot."

"My dear sir! What a horrible thought!" Sir Henry shuddered. "I do trust, I earnestly trust, you can prevent that outrage. My Greek diadem melted down! The Etruscan necklace! The—I beg your pardon, but pray let me impress on you, it is not the punishment of the thief, not even his capture that I am anxious for, but the recovery of my collection. If I could be assured that it was safe and in hands that would respect it, I believe I could bear the loss—but melted down! An intolerable wrong."

"Yes. I feel that. Yes," Reggie mur-

"The report was jewellery, sir," Bell broke in. "You only mentioned gold. Were there any jewels—I mean to say, precious stones?"

"I have never cared for gems," Sir Henry said with simple dignity. "These pieces are simple wrought gold, Superintendent—a band for the head, necklaces, brooches, rings,

and so forth."

"Then taking the ordinary crook's point of view, like Mr. Fortune said, there'd be nothing in it but the bullion value of the gold. Would you say there's any chance the things were stolen for another collector?"

"Good heavens! I never thought of such a thing. A burglar in the employ of a collector! Surely it's unheard of."

"You never know what you'll hear of," Bell smiled. "But I didn't mean that exactly. Say some chap knew where he could get a proper fancy price for the stuff. Might be in with a collector—some of 'em aren't too particular, are they?' More likely with a dealer. I'm asking you, sir, do you know anybody who's been after this sort of stuff?"

"Really, Superintendent, I couldn't answer that. Many men would pay very high prices for such pieces as mine. But you must see that no one would dare show them. They are unmatched." Sir Henry smiled. "I'm afraid you don't understand the collector's feelings. A great part of his satisfaction is that others should know he possesses his treasures. Cruel perhaps, but man is so."

"I see that." Bell stuck to his point. But is there anybody particular you know

about after this kind of stuff?"

"Upon my word—" Sir Henry was embarrassed. "After the way you have put it, I hardly like to say—but it can't be a secret. Mr. Hamilton Tromp has been in treaty with me."

Reggie was turning over the catalogue of

the collection. He looked up.

"Hamilton Tromp?" said Lomas. "The American banker?"

"I believe he was a banker. But a most charming person. I need not say he is altogether above any suspicion. In fact, he was coming down to see the collection again to-day."

"Again. Oh. Oh, he had seen the

things!" Reggie murmured.

"Certainly. He was here last week. He



was very much impressed. Really too flattering to my judgment."

"Were you going to sell, sir?" said Bell.

"I must own I had contemplated it. Much of my own pleasure in collecting is derived from the search. When I find that there is a very high price offered for some part of my collections, I incline to accept it and employ the money in acquiring objects of another class not as yet in equal demand."

Lomas smiled. "Quite. You like to set

the fashion in collecting."

"I am bound to confess, my taste is rather to seek what the world has not yet learnt to appreciate. Or perhaps I make a pleasure of necessity. I cannot compete with the new wealth."

"Well, sir, Mr. Hamilton Tromp wanted the things." Bell was growing impatient.

"Had he made you an offer?"

"I think I may say that. You will please to consider it in confidence. He spoke of twenty thousand pounds."

The Chief Constable whistled. "You hadn't accepted that?" said Bell sharply.

"My dear sir, shall we say that I was con-

templating it?"

Sir Henry smiled. "Mr. Tromp was coming to see the collection again, you see. Perhaps I hoped that he might find it still more attractive."

"Let him think he'd have to bid higher

to get it? I see."

"That was perhaps in my mind." Sir Henry's smile took an engagingly rueful twist. "It would appear that I have overreached myself. If I had accepted his twenty thousand pounds last week—why, I should not have given you all this trouble."

"Now about the burglary," said Bell briskly. "Who was here last night?"

"I was in London myself. The house was in the charge of my butler, a very old servant. My secretary, Mr. Edward Meyer, was also here, or rather he should have been The butler tells me that Mr. Meyer had a telephone call in the afternoon and soon after left the house with a suit-case saying he should be away some days. Pray understand that I do not blame him. It may have been some urgent private call. Mr. Meyer has been with me a year, nearly two years, and has always deserved my confidence. But I have to say that he had no leave of absence and I do not understand why he left without any explanation. When the butler came down this morning he found a pane of glass in a casement window broken and the window open. But you will wish to see." He took them downstairs into a passage. . . .

"Soft job," said Bell. "Put a hand through the glass, lifted the catch, and climbed in." He looked at Sir Henry. "Rather rash, keeping thousands of pounds worth of stuff in a house with no protection."

"My dear sir, I have kept it here for years. But you leap to conclusions. There is protection. All my portable collections here, the goldsmiths' work and my miniatures are in the rooms upstairs, where we were talking. The doors and windows are fitted with a burglar alarm. The butler switched it on as usual last night. When he found the broken window he went at once to the It was turned off. He hurried upstairs-but let me show you." He led the way back to the wainscotted room above. "This door was not locked, though he had locked it. Nor this either." He passed into a smaller room where the panelling was pale blue. "And the cabinet"—he pointed to a noble piece of walnut, the door of which stood open, showing a range of closed drawers. He pulled out one after another showing bare blue velvet—" empty, empty." He turned away and walked to the window with emotions. . . .

"The room doors were opened with keys," said Bell heavily. "This cabinet door was

forced."

Sir Henry turned back, putting his handkerchief away. "Indeed, yes. A cruel thing." He caressed the damaged wood.

".Well, I'd like to talk to the butler of course," said Bell. "But taking what he says—it looks like the job was done by somebody who knew all about the house and could manage a key for everything except the cabinet. What sort of a fellow is your secretary, sir?"

"A most excellent person," said Sir Henry plaintively. "Very capable and

trustworthy."

Bell grunted. "I mean, what is he like to look at. You don't happen to have a

photograph?"

"I can't misunderstand you." Sir Henry looked at Lomas. "Pray keep it before you that I am reluctant to believe anything against Mr. Meyer."

"We shall have to find him, you know," said Lomas. "If he's innocent he'll come

back of himself."

"Ah yes, that is clear. I believe there should be some passport photographs. We were both taken this year." He went out.

"So Meyer's got a passport," Bell said did have chaps come to the house.
"Looks like an international job." butler didn't think much of em.

Sir Henry came back with a photograph which showed the absent Meyer, a young man of square Germanic face, very fair.

Bell looked at it with satisfaction. "That's a type, anyway. Well, I'll have a

talk with the butler if I may."

Reggie followed him out. The butler was found in the hall at the telephone. "Mr. who? Mr. Tromp. Oh yes, sir, Sir Henry is here. Very good, sir. You will not be coming to-day. Thank you, sir." He turned to see Bell.

"All right. Take it up," Bell said. "Then I want a word with you."

Reggie opened the door and looked out and shivered and gave a little cry of joy.

"What is it, sir?"

"Oh Bell, my Bell." Reggie clutched him.
"There's a village. There'll be an inn.
Pick me up there." He caught up his coat and made haste. . . .

Outside that inn the car hooted. Reggie came out in time. He sank into his corner and groaned faintly. "Your egg is a saddening thing," he said. "A moral lesson. You eat to live, and never want to eat again. I had two. Two moral lessons, Lomas. The world is very evil, the times are waxing late."

"You drivel, Reginald." Lomas eyed him severely. "You are above yourself. I suppose you have had a brain-wave?"

"My dear fellow. Oh, my dear fellow. The brain could not wave. Eggs is eggs.

I feel all garmy inside."

"I could have done with an egg myself," said Bell gloomily. "We only had a cup o' tea. China tea too."

"Yes, I thought the food would be defective. A man of the spirit, our Sir Henry."

"He asked us to dine with him," said Lomas. "He does you very well, too. Don't be facetious, Reginald. We are not amused. You didn't go to the inn to eat eggs."

"No. No. Fearing yet hoping. But eggs it was. And the void within compelled. Other motives for the rash act—well, I wanted to verify things. All correct. Sir Henry is a nice quiet gentleman, and that Mr. Meyer does go poking about and he has some rum chaps down to see him, but he can drink his drop o' beer. Also a car was heard last night. In the small hours going up to the house—then coming back—and off on the road to the downs."

"All fits, don't it?" Bell said. "Meyer

did have chaps come to the house. The butler didn't think much of 'em. Sir Henry says he had leave though: they were supposed to be student friends—he'd been at one of these new Universities. The butler's a bit of an ass, but straight enough, I reckon. He told us the same tale as Sir Henry. Meyer had a telephone call, rang up a place at the station for a car and went off in it prompt with a suit-case. The butler thought it was some job for Sir Henry. Sir Henry says he has sometimes called Meyer up to London. The butler heard nothing in the night. None of the servants heard anything."

"And that's that," Reggie murmured.
"Looks a pretty straight case, sir. The local police have been after Meyer already, of course. He went to the station and took a ticket for London. But that's nothing. It was a stopping train. He might have got off anywhere. I take it he met some of these pals of his, came back in a car, cleared out the jewellery and went off."

"On the road to the downs. Yes. It could be. And the next thing, please."

"Thank you, we've done that," Lomas smiled. "Mr. Meyer's description went off by telephone. The road to the downs is the road to the Channel ports. The local people will comb the country for him and his car, of course. But I expect he's overseas by now. We've notified the French police and they'll have his photograph in Paris to-morrow."

"Yes. Yes. We do want Mr. Meyer.

Anything else occur to you?"

"Oh, his associates, of course. We may work back to them. He came to Exon fresh from the University."

"Yes. You might find out where his telephone call came from. I could bear to know. But there's another unknown factor."

"I haven't noticed it," said Lomas.

"Oh, my dear fellow. Mr. Hamilton Tromp. Observe the influence of Mr. Hamilton Tromp."

"He didn't turn up to-day," Lomas

"I know. Conspicuous absence of Mr. Tromp. Well, well, mustn't make too much of one symptom. But he is a recurrin' influence. He comes to England keen on this collection—twenty thousand pounds keen. He sees it and Exon is coy. He was comin' down to see it again to-day. And it gets stolen last night. Interestin' sequence of events."

"Good Heavens," said Lomas. "You don't suspect Tromp? Twenty thousand is

small change to him."

"One of the world's great men," said Reggie reverently. "No, I don't suspect him. I wouldn't dare. But he is a dramatis persona. I wonder."

Lomas looked at him with some alarm. "Is there anything you want to do?"

"Oh, no. No. I never want to do anything. I'm going home to dinner. I'd ask

you, but you'll be busy."

"Confound you," Lomas growled, and conferred with Bell upon the measures, national and international, to catch

Meyer.

For the next two days Mr. Fortune was much occupied with the post-mortem on the golf champion. You will remember the acquittal of the wife. A popular case. On the evening of the second day the telephone in his laboratory rang. "Is that you, Reginald? Lomas speaking. We've got him."

"Fancy!" said Reggie. "Who is he?"
"Meyer," said the telephone. "Come
round. It might be something in your
way."

"Oh, my aunt," Reggie groaned. "I

haven't a way."

"Come along. M. Dubois wants to meet

you."

Lomas and Bell sat in council with a large man from whom black hair and moustaches flowed. "Ah, my dear Reginald." Lomas rose with ceremony. "Here is M. Dubois of the Sûreté, who is so kind as to give us his assistance: Mr. Fortune."

"In fact, we need it," said Reggie in

French.

"This is to me a great honour," said

Dubois in English.

Honour being thus satisfied, Lomas explained that M. Dubois had caught Meyer in Paris. Reggie murmured admiration. Dubois spread out his hands and laughed. "But it is nothing. You do it all for us. We have a perfect description. We have almost where to look for him. I tell my people to watch the shops of antiquesand there he is at the shop of old Klix. He is not one of the best, father Klix, no. They follow M. Meyer to his hotel, a little old hotel of the Latin quarter, and they ask him to come to the Sûreté. He is surprised, he protests, but he comes. Then I interrogate him. He says yes, it is true, he is Edwin Meyer, secretary of Sir Exon. Why then is he in Paris talking to father Klix? But Sir Exon told him by telephone to go at once to Paris and seek among the dealers for ancient jewels. Very well. But Sir Exon knows nothing of that. Mr. Meyer offers us amazement. Sir Exon declares that Mr. Meyer is departed without orders, and with Mr. Meyer departed also Sir Exon's collection of jewels. Again, amazement and more. He cannot understand—there was a telephone—he has not got the jewels, he—it is mad—he is quite overcome. Very well, what is this then in his baggage? For you will believe we have not omitted to examine that. One suit-case, that is all. It is quite correct, there is only his clothes, and a book. But inside it is not quite so big as outside. In effect, it has at the bottom too much thickness. We open the lining. Beneath is a compartment like the smugglers use, and in it a piece of worked gold and a paper. You see." He presented to Reggie a cardboard box in which lay on cotton-wool plates of dull gold making a clasp, and a paper covered with figures.

Reggie looked at them casually. "Yes. Several new facts. Yes. Resumin' the narrative—what did Meyer say about these

exhibits?"

"What would you?" Dubois smiled.
"He declares to know nothing. He never had them. I show him the compartment in his suit-case. He did not know it was there. He is frightened, overcome. So, we have him for you. There will be no difficulty when you demand him. The rest is for you, my friends. But I envy you. It has the air of a case most interesting."

"Yes, I think so." Reggie smiled. He lifted the gold clasp on its wool. "Have

you gone into this at all?"

"It has no finger-prints. For the rest, it says nothing to me." Dubois pulled his moustaches. "We have a report of experts. They say it is without doubt a work Merovingian. Perhaps fourteen hundred years old, perhaps eleven hundred. Yes, they have it as near as that, these wise men," he smiled. "One must admit it lacks elegance. I do not understand the delight in what is done without skill. But I am old-fashioned. However, they say there are few things like it in the world. A pity!" He made a grimace. "Sir Exon will certainly know it if it is his."

"We'll have him along soon," said Lomas.
"He's coming up from Watlings with his mouth wide open."

"Oh, yes. Yes. Any news from the Watlings end?"

"Nothing doing, sir." Bell shook his head. "They can't trace the car at all."

"The road to the downs?" Reggie murmured.

"Well, sir, what could they do with that?" Bell protested. "A car running on in the night! I ask you."

on in the night! I ask you."

Reggie sighed. "I know you're not ingenious in the Force, but you might take

pains."

M. Dubois listened to this with the patience of a wise man for the methods of the foreigner. "Mr. Fortune," he said, "I venture to ask your attention for the paper. It has appeared to me very curious."

"Yes. I think so." Reggie smiled. "Yes. Pray let me have your help. I'm rather afraid of that paper. It looks like a lot of work." He spread it out on the table, a sheet torn from a writing-pad. On it was written the one word "Mignon" and a number of figures with dots between:

10 . 8 . 14 . 3 . 17 . 3 . 18 . 9 . 8 . 18 . 2 . 14 . 13 . 10 . 12 . 4 . 16 . 2 . 3 . 18 . 14 . 8 . 15 . 2 . 3 .

"One must say it, in my little affairs, I have never seen anything like that."

"No. No. Bald and disconcertin'."

"The possibilities are almost infinite."

"Yes. Quite a lot. Yes."

Lomas looked it over. "Ordinary type of cipher, what? Each number stands for a word or a letter. Some of the fellows who were working out ciphers for the Secret Service in the War will manage it for us."

"I congratulate you," Dubois shrugged.

"They are then more clever than ours. I ask one of ours to translate it. He asks for a year and even then he will promise nothing. I am not surprised. You see, my friend, I understand these things a little. First, it is very short. There are only twenty-five words, perhaps only twenty-five letters. That is not much material to experiment. Second, we do not know at all what it is about—"

"Damme, it must be about the stolen

jewels," Lomas cried.

"That is very probable, my friend. But is it what one has to do or what has been done, about persons or places, or things? Third, we do not know what is the language. This Meyer, he is English, but he speaks French well enough, he reads at least Italian—oh, yes, he had a play of Pirandello in his room. Fourth, it is probably a cipher quite arbitrary. One takes a book anywhere, one makes a key—perhaps number ten means A, perhaps it means Z, perhaps 'arrive,' perhaps

'depart,' or perhaps a whole phrase. How many million books are there in the world, tell me? Shall I read them all? And then perhaps the key is in an advertisement on a poster. I tell you, the possibilities are almost infinite. And my life is short. And while I work at the cipher, the jewels are gone."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured.

"You see something, sir?" said Dubois

quickly.

"No. I wouldn't say that. No. Quite a nasty job. But why was the cipher in Meyer's suit-case?" He looked at Dubois with round, innocent eyes. "Why was he keepin' it?"

"What do I know?" Dubois shrugged. "It is instructions, perhaps: or a message of a meeting-place: or it is a note what is

done with the jewels."

"Yes, it could be," Reggie murmured.
"But we ought to be able to make something of the thing," said Lomas. "Look here: the number 3 occurs four times, the numbers 8, 14, 18 and 2 three times, none of the others so often. Assume they are the five commonest letters. That gives us a start."

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow!" Reggie sighed. "The child's guide to cipher. By S. Lomas. That sort of dodge only works out in parlour games. But try it." He scribbled rapidly: 10 . t . n . e . 7 . e . a . 9 . t . a . s . n . 13 . 10 . 12 . 4 . 16 . s . e . a . n . t . 15 . s . e . "It don't look hopeful."

Dubois shrugged. "There are only a thousand reasons why it should not. First, these calculations about the most frequent letters, they are useless when you have only a few words. In a message of twenty-five letters, it is very possible that the most frequent is not 'e' at all. Second—we do not know that the numbers mean letters. Third—""

"Help!" said Reggie. "My friend, don't give us the rest of the thousand. We believe you. Even Lomas believes you. Hallo!" The telephone rang and Lomas, conferring with it, announced that Exon had come.

Sir Henry was brought up. He fluttered excitement. He didn't quite grasp Mr. Lomas's message, he had hurried to Town, he did hope there was some good news.

"Well, we've caught Meyer," said Lomas. Sir Henry took breath. "But that is wonderful; my dear Lomas, you will forgive me, it is not what you expected, I think,"

"I didn't expect anything," Lomas rebuked him.

"Indeed, no. I understood that you thought you would have great difficultiesit would be a long affair. But Meyer appears to have surprised you. I hope the poor fellow has been able to clear himself.'

"See what you think," said Lomas, and

again Dubois told his tale.

"Meyer said he had a telephone message from me?" Sir Henry cried. "But it is incredible. I sent no message. I—I ordered him abroad—and to visit the dealers? I never thought of such a thing. The false fellow."

Dubois continued. Dubois offered him the gold clasp. At that Sir Henry gave a little crooning cry and caressed the thing. "It is, then, yours? You are fortunate," Dubois shrugged.

"But this is all he had?" Sir Henry's

voice rose.

"It is all," said Dubois. "Except this,

sir." He produced the paper.

"Mignon," Sir Henry read. "What is Mignon? And then figures. A cipher! My dear Lomas, can you make this out?"

"I'm afraid that's going to be difficult." Lomas shook his head. "You have no ideas about it?"

Indeed, I have no experience of such things." Sir Henry puzzled over it.
"One must assume that it is something about my collection. Lomas!" He leant forward with gleaming eyes. "Perhaps it is a clue to the hiding-place."

"Perhaps it is," said Lomas. "But we

can't read it."

"You can make out nothing of it? My dear Lomas, surely you have experts for this sort of thing?" He looked at Mr. Fortune.

no. No. Don't blame me." "Oh, Reggie smiled. "It's not in my way."

"I shall of course refer it to experts," said Lomas with dignity. "I must tell you, I'm

advised it's a difficult problem."

"Really?" Sir Henry was distressed. "That suggests a terribly long delay. Pray use your best endeavours, Lomas. This uncertainty is intolerable. I wonder if I could find any suggestion among my friends. May I have a copy? Ah, thank you so much. I must rack my brains. It will be in a manner of relief." He fluttered out.

"And that is that," Reggie murmured. "Well, I'll have a copy too. My dear Dubois, are you going back to Paris to-night? No? But come and dine with me, then. If you will take your chance. At least I can give you some Burgundy 'from behind the

faggots.' "

It was not of the cipher, nor of the jewels of Sir Henry that they talked over the Musigny, but of pictures and of music, of poetry and sculpture. "This is to me an evening I shall remember always," said Dubois on Reggie's doorstep. "Cher maître. I have had a lesson in the art of life."

Reggie went back to his wife. "Rather a lamb," she smiled. But he did not answer. He wandered to the piano and began to play. His wife rose slowly and came to him. "No," she said with decision. "No, dear." She removed his hands from the kevs.

"Perhaps you're right," Reggie leaned his head back to look at her. "Did you know

what it was, Joan?"

"In the struggle there were glimpses of the victim." She sat down and herself began to play.

"Yes. Yes. It is Mignon's song, isn't

it?" said Reggie pathetically.

"This is," said Mrs. Fortune. She began to sing:

"Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühn Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn-

Reggie sat listening, and his round face gazed at her with sad, childlike wonder. She finished and turned to him smiling. "Yes. You're nice, Joan," he murmured, and kissed her. "Good night."

"My dear child!" she laughed. "Aren't

you coming to bed?"

"No. No. I don't think so," said Reggie sadly. He wandered out and away to his consulting room. He sank into the big chair by the fire with a pad on his knee. . . .

In the middle of the next morning Lomas and Bell, conferring together, were startled by a joyless "Hullo!" He drifted round their table to the fire and huddled over it.

Lomas put up his eyeglass. "What a ghostly arrival! Why so pale and wan, fond lover? Was the Burgundy too abundant, Reginald?"

"Oh, Peter!" Reggie moaned. "Did you drag me out of bed to hear you bein'

funny?

"Only just up? Tut, tut. Very much the morning after. I hope you didn't lead poor Dubois astray."

"Dubois is a man of taste," said Reggie

severely.

Lomas chuckled. "Well, what about it ? "

"Your apology is noted," said Reggie.
"My poor Lomas, what do you want?

Have you read the cipher?"

"Good Heavens, no. Colonel Arnold says the chance of solving it is about a million to one unless we can give him some clue."

is over," he said, and shut his eyes and began to whistle softly Mignon's song.

"Well, the fact is, Hamilton Tromp has rung up to ask for an appointment. I told him to come along. I thought you'd like to see him."



"Reggie sat listening, and his round face gazed at her with sad, childlike wonder."

"Yes, we knew that much yesterday. What do you want me for?"

"Oh, I thought you'd like to hear the good news," Lomas chuckled. "I'm afraid you've not been keeping your mind on the case, Reginald."

Reggie sighed. "Tell me when the joke

"Yes. One of the unknown factors moves forward," Reggie murmured. "Yes. I could bear to meet Mr. Tromp." He went on whistling.

Bell looked at him curiously. "Have you thought of anything, sir?"

"There's the telephone, you know."

Reggie opened his eyes. "Where did the call come from that Meyer had and Sir Henry didn't send?"

"I've got that, sir. Watlings was rung up from a post-office box in Belhaven. But nobody remembers the man, of course."

"In Belhaven." Reggie looked at him.

"That's just beyond the downs."

"I know it is. I dare say that's where the car went. And Meyer could get a boat for France from there. But that's not much good to us."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," Reggie mur-

mured.

"We ought to be smelling along the road, I suppose." Lomas laughed.

suppose. Lomas laugheu.

"Well, you might do something," Reggie sighed; and again he whistled.

"What is that tune, sir?" Bell said

sharply.

"Don't you know it? Quite an old thing." He hummed the words: "Kennst du das Land—remember, Lomas?"

"Sounds like the operas of my vanished

youth. What about it?"

Over Reggie's face came a slow benign smile. "My dear old thing! Think it over."

But Mr. Hamilton Tromp interrupted. He was a large person of stately aspect, polite and voluble. They would no doubt understand that he wished for their advice in the matter of Sir Henry Exon's collection. Sir Henry had told him they had been informed he hoped to buy it. He now heard from Sir Henry that the man Meyer had been arrested with one of the pieces upon him and a cipher which was believed to describe the hiding-place of the rest. What he came to ask was whether they had a reasonable hope of recovering the things. If so, he would stay on in England; if not, he was anxious to sail for America.

"Of course Sir Henry knows you are consulting us, Mr. Tromp?" Lomas said.

"I have his permission, sir. In point of fact, he advised me to call on you and judge for myself."

"I can only tell you that we have not been

able to translate the cipher."

"But Sir Henry has no doubt you will," Mr. Tromp insisted. "I understand he considers it will yield to treatment. In point of fact he seemed to think he might be able to handle it himself. He is naturally sanguine. But he is a man of capacity and he has a great deal of curious knowledge."

he has a great deal of curious knowledge."
"Quite. Quite," Lomas agreed. "I
hope he'll succeed. We can only advise you

that it is uncertain whether the cipher can be read and whether it would prove useful if it were."

"That's straight," said Mr. Tromp ruefully. "Well, I'm going down to him at Watlings. I'll have to tell him it's up to him. I'll give him three days and I quit. If you find you have some good hopes, I wouldn't know how to thank you. I wanted those things." He departed with punctilious, melancholy salutations.

"That bein' thus," said Reggie, "I think we had better get on." He drew a chair to the table, he hummed the first lines of the German song. "Words by the late Goethe. Music by the late Ambroise Thomas. With variations by anon." He spread out a sheet of paper. "While you were lapped in sleep,

Lomas, I was workin': thus.

"Good Heavens! You don't mean to say

you've got it?"

"Yes, I think so," Reggie smiled. "Mignon. Term of endearment: applied to fillet of beef. But also to a character of Mr. Goethe's, who was turned into opera. She has a song. It came to me while Dubois was talking about sculpture. Genius, Lomas, just genius. Why begin the cipher with Mignon? Because Mignon's song is the key. Observe." He displayed his paper.

Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühn Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn—

"Number the letters in the order of their appearance, then K is 1, e is 2, n is 3, s 4, and so on till g 18: which is all we want. Take the cipher.

10 . 8 . 14 . 3 . 7 . 3 . 18 . 9 . 8 . 18 . 2 . 14 . 13 . 10 . 12 . 4 . 16 . 2 . 3 . 18 . 14 . 8 . 15 . 2 . 3 . You see it translates W.a.r.n.u.n.g.l.a.g.e.r.z.w.i.s.c.h. e.n.g.r.a.b.e.n."

"The deuce it does," said Lomas. "And where are we, then? Warnunglagerzwischengraben. What jargon is that?"

"Oh, my dear fellow! Didn't you learn anything at school? It's German, of course, like the song. Warnung Lager zwischen Graben. Warning camp between tombs."

"Very lucid. Like a telegram gone mad. Apparently from the War Office. To the marines. Warning what camp? Between what tombs? Very ingenious, Reginald. And smells like a red herring."

"My poor Lomas. Hush. Hush," Reggie soothed him. "We have here a map of the country round Watlings. You will observe two miles away, upon this

common, an ancient earthwork called Warning Camp: also several tumuli. means graves, Lomas dear, tombs."

"My dear chap!" Lomas held out his

hand. "I abase myself, I grovel."

"It's the trickiest thing I ever saw," Bell grunted, and in a paternal manner his hand rested on Reggie's shoulder.

"Yes. Rather involved," Reggie murmured. "I wonder. Well, well, let's get

on. My car's here."

Lomas and Bell exchanged looks of anxiety. "You didn't think of driving yourself, sir?" said Bell. For Mr. Fortune's driving is a nightmare to his friends.

"Yes, thanks. Life is short."

"But sweet," Lomas groaned. "But sweet."

Reggie looked at him with contempt. "I'd like to have some stout fellow," he

"Oh, by all means. To hold the car on

the road, I presume?"

"No. To hold your hand," said Reggie, and went out. He was already at the wheel, he was settling himself deep in his fur coat and his gauntlets when they came with a third man even squarer, even more solid than Bell, Inspector Cosh.

"By the way, Reginald—in case there are no survivors—what about advising Exon?"

"We'll advise him when we've done the

trick. Come on."

Lomas smiled. "I noticed you didn't tell Tromp. You prefer to verify your results first? Perhaps you're right. Caution, Reginald, always caution."

The big car made arabesques through the traffic. It was an hour out of London, but more miles than may be told, when it slowed. "Good Heavens, is he ill?" said Lomas.

"I hope so."

But the check only brought them off the high-road into a twisting lane. "What's he at? We're not near the place by ten miles." They progressed round the blind corners in romantic variations of speed. "Standing leaps, begad," Lomas groaned. "Feeling sea-sick, Bell? You will be." His eyes rolled. . . . The car was stopped as if it had hit a wall. Lomas slid from his seat with a yelp. The car slid slowly back under trees and stopped.

Reggie turned. "Takin' cover, Lomas? Quite right. That's the place." He pointed ahead to a low hill of heather, brown in the wintry light. Its summit bore a ridge of earthwork. "Warning Camp. As adver-

tised."

"Quite." Lomas rearranged himself.

"Why this dramatic pause?"

"There was some one up there," Reggie . watched the hill. "Two of you cut across the fields and take it from the far side." Bell and Cosh made off together and the car moved on to the foot of the hill.

But when they met again on the bank at the summit the net had caught nothing, there was no one in sight. Lomas paced the heather to and fro. "Dear me, Reginald," he said demurely. "Are you sure you've come to the right place?"

"There's the tombs," Reggie mumbled.

He pointed to two long mounds.

"Quite. But where are the jewels? Between the tombs! This ground hasn't been touched in ages." He laughed. "My dear Reginald! How sad! But after all, how salutary! How good for you! You point a moral and adorn a tale. One should verify one's ingenious theories."

"Yes. Yes." Reggie regarded him with plaintive eyes. "That is indicated. Come on." He led the way fast down the hill-

"It's been a delightful afternoon," Lomas chuckled.

"Oh, yes. Very interesting. I didn't think there'd be anything here, you know."

Lomas stopped short: took hold of him: swung him round. "You-didn't think!" he said slowly. "Then what the dickens _____ ? ",

"That's why I wanted to come quickly. Now if Cosh will take cover and watch, we can go and eat a small meal. Nothing will happen just yet."

"My good Reginald!" Lomas gasped. "How long do you propose to linger with

this mare's nest?"

Reggie gazed at him. "Oh, a night," he said dreamily. "And perhaps another

night. That will do, Lomas."

After dusk, the car brought them back again to the faithful Cosh, and him they fed and disposed themselves about the hill and the dark closed upon them. It was growing late, the frost began to bite into the ground and their unhappy bodies when the sound of a small car came near. The engine was stopped. A man climbed the hill slowly, put down a burden and began to work at the ground. He had finished, he was hurrying away when the bulk of Inspector Cosh rose behind him. He was gripped and helpless between Cosh and Bell when Reggie arrived and flashed a torch on him. It showed a lean, dark, capable face unknown. "Were



police officers," Bell was saying. "I arrest you on suspicion of being concerned in the

burglary at Watlings."

"And who may you be?" said Reggie. There was no answer. "Well, well. I suppose it was rather a shock. You'd better see your solicitor." He was marched away, to his own car, and Reggie's chauffeur drove Bell off with him.

"Very neat, Reginald," said Lomas. "Infernally neat. Now, we'd better have this stuff up and we can get off to bed."

"Am I in charge, please?" said Reggie with some acidity.

"I beg your pardon!"

"Yes, I think so. Well, we won't dig the stuff up. We'll leave Cosh watching over it, till we can send up two local bobbies. And so to bed, Lomas. Thankin' you for all kind thoughts."

In the morning, in the pleasant town of Midworth, Reggie was eating its memorable sausages when Lomas brought in Bell and the Chief Constable. "Wonderful bit of work, Mr. Fortune," the Chief Constable began.

Thanks so much. Yes. I hope we've got something human for you this time. Does he talk?"

"No, he won't say a word."
"Well, well, that's human too."

"We know who he is all right. Name of Arch. Lives in a nice little place up in the downs—"

"The road to the downs," Reggie mur-

"Yes, that car must have been his, taking the stuff up to his place. But we never thought of him. He's been living there a long time. Quite respectable. Does this modern arts and crafts work. Sells it in a shop at Belhaven called St. Guthlac's Guildsmen."

And Reggie's masticating face set slowly in a benign smile. "Now you see it all, Lomas," he said. "No? My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!" He stood up. "Well, well. Last act. First scene. Watlings."

When they came to Watlings on that



"There came out of the earth a sack, and he fell on his knees. 'It is! It is my collection! Look, Tromp! The Etruscan necklace. The Greek diadem.'"

sunlit frosty morning, Mr. Tromp was smoking his cigar in the garden. He made haste to them. "Yes, I hoped you'd be here," said Reggie. "Has Exon read his

cipher yet?"

"He has not." Mr. Tromp turned the cigar in his mouth. "He was really hopeful last night. Quite gay. He said he could almost promise me good news this morning. But I judge not. I've heard him about and he don't show."

And then Sir Henry did show. He came fluttering out. "Ah, my dear Lomas.

have some news for me?"

"Yes, I think so," Reggie murmured. "What, what, you have solved it, Mr. Fortune?"

"Yes, I've solved it," said Reggie.

"You'd better put on a coat."

"You want to take me somewhere?" Sir Henry cried.

"Oh, yes, yes. And Mr. Tromp, please." "You have recovered the collection?"

"I wouldn't say that. No, I wouldn't say that."

"But what do you mean, then?"

"Well, I don't know it, you see. But you will, won't you?"

"I'll know it," said Mr. Tromp.

"You think so?" Reggie smiled. "Come

Two cars moved away from Watlings. "But where are we going?" Sir Henry said

Reggie looked at him. "Mignon," he "Mignon's song. Kennst du das

Land-

"Ah, but of course!" Sir Henry smote his "How brilliant you are, Mr. Fortune. Mignon's song, that is the key. The wretched Meyer, he was half German and a great musician. Why did I never think of that?" He looked from one to the other.

"Well, why didn't you?" said Mr. Tromp

harshly.

"But then the cipher," Sir Henry bleated.

"How does it work out?"

"Oh—numbered letters," Reggie sighed. "So you get Warnung Lager zwischen Graben."

"I don't know Yiddish," said Mr. Tromp.

"Warnung Lager?" Sir Henry repeated. "Ah, but that must be Warning Camp. And between-between the what?"

"The tombs," said Reggie.

"The tombs? Tombs? But it's a hill, Mr. Fortune, a hill of common land. I don't understand."

"Well, well," said Reggie wearily. "You

The cars stopped at the base of the hill. They climbed to the two constables guarding the turned earth and the abandoned spade. Dig it up, please," said Reggie.

"Oh, I see, I see," Sir Henry fluttered. "Between the tumuli, Tromp. But how

brilliant, Mr. Fortune."

There came out of the earth a sack, and he fell on his knees. "It is! It is my collection! Look, Tromp! The Etruscan necklace. The Greek diadem."

"Sure," said Mr. Tromp, and took them from him. A string of beads of rough gold, a band of gold with pendants, other things. The two handled them and gloated and muttered. Mr. Tromp held out his hand and Sir Henry took it in both of his.

"Thank you, thank you," Sir Henry's voice quavered. "My dear friend. You are very kind. But indeed I have to give you

joy." He did not look it.

"Oh, you are selling them to Mr. Tromp?" said Reggie.

"They're mine, sir," said Mr. Tromp firmly. "That's right, Exon?"

"I must own I can hardly bear to let them go." Sir Henry gave a doleful laugh. "But I did agree. It's a sad wrench, Tromp, now I have recovered them so marvellously."

"Well, you're recovering twenty-five thousand pounds," Mr. Tromp shrugged.

"Is that so?" Reggie murmured. "Well now, we'll go along to Mr. Arch's nice little place in the downs."

"What's that?" Mr. Tromp stared and

Sir Henry caught at his arm.

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" Reggie smiled. "Mr. Arch was the fellow who buried this little collection. I want you to see if he has anything more in his house."

"Sure," said Mr. Tromp.

"But there is no more," Sir Henry cried. "Everything that I lost is here."

"I wonder," Reggie smiled.

"But this is preposterous—" Sir Henry protested. "I have nothing else to look for

"No. But I have," said Reggie, and Bell shepherded the protesting old man back to the cars.

The nice little place of Mr. Arch was a grey stone house high in a combe of the downs and lonely. A policeman lounged at the gate. A scared old woman opened the door to them and babbled of master being away and was given to the policeman. The ground-floor rooms were open and of ordinary comfort, except one. "Got his keys, Bell?" said Reggie, and the locked door was opened to let them into a large workshop with lathe and carpenter's tools and a jeweller's bench and cylinders of gas. "Versatile craftsman, Mr. Arch," Reggie murmured. "I wonder." He drifted round the room prying here and there, finding nothing. He led the way upstairs. Another locked door yielded to Bell. They went into a spacious room in the twilight of shuttered windows. Bell pulled the shutters back.

"Good Heavens!" Lomas put up his

eyeglass.

"I don't swear myself," said Mr. Tromp slowly. "But do what you can." He gazed round the room. It was furnished sparely but with singular grace and splendour. The walls were panelled in silver maple. A Chinese carpet of soft and luscious colour lay upon the floor. There was an Elizabethan day-bed. Upon an old Italian table of austere beauty stood some silver things. "The burglar's humble home," said Mr. Tromp with reverence. "And I thought I had a good room or two myself. I chose the wrong trade." And then in two strides he reached the silver. He picked up a large piece of elaborate work. turned it over and over. "Well now! If I didn't know old man Vandyke had the Melrose candlestick, I——"

"Do you?" Reggie smiled. He was opening a chest painted in many colours

mellow with age.

"I have seen it, sir," Mr. Tromp stared. "In Boston."

"Oh, yes, yes. Have you seen these?"
Mr. Tromp came to look. On the black wood within lay a necklace of rough gold beads, a band of gold with pendants, and

other things all gold.

"The Etruscan necklace. The Greek diadem," Reggie murmured: he turned to Sir Henry with a smile. "Yes. As you were sayin'. Nothing is lost. Everything you had is here. Except the Merovingian clasp which was put in Mr. Meyer's suit-case."

"But it's bewildering. It's impossible,"

Sir Henry cried.

Mr. Tromp was poring over the things. "If I hadn't seen the other lot, I'd have sworn to these." He offered them to Sir Henry's shaking hands.

"Yes, yes. And if you hadn't seen these, Sir Henry would have sold you the others."

Reggie smiled.

"You have me beat." Mr. Tromp looked

at him without affection. "I would. And I thought I knew something too."

"Oh, don't be discouraged. It was very

well staged."

"Staged!" Mr. Tromp did not swear, but he looked it. "What are you giving me?"

"Sir Henry will now explain." Reggie sat down on the day-bed.

"These—these are really most wonderful imitations," Sir Henry quavered.

"Oh, no, no. Not these," Reggie smiled. "The others."

"Upon my honour, I could not be sure. I should have to make a careful comparison. I must examine them at home. I—I'll

go into it at once, if you please."

"No. I don't think you'll be goin' home, Exon," said Reggie. "You're wanted elsewhere. For quite a while. First charge, attempt to obtain money by false pretences from Mr. Tromp."

"This is intolerable!" Sir Henry cried. "My dear Tromp, of course you understand, in the circumstances I should not dream of any sale. This—this insult——"he spluttered at Reggie. "Quite superfluous. I hope my reputation is well enough known, Lomas——"

"No, not yet," said Reggie. will be. You meant to sell Mr. Tromp a set of copies, which the versatile Arch was to make. Same like he made a copy of that Melrose candlestick which you sold to Vandyke, retainin' the real one here to gloat over. I dare say when we go through his place we'll find some other pretty things. It must have been an amusing business, sellin' the copies with pedigree to innocent millionaires and keepin' the originals in your private apartments. Yes. I remember you told me, one of the joys of a collector was that other fellows should know he had the things they wanted. It must be even more joyous to think of them believin' they've got the things which you've kept: having sold for a price. Adds quite a flavour to collecting."

"I am not here to listen to these insults," Sir Henry cried. "Lomas—my dear Lomas

"You'd better understand your position," said Lomas sharply.

"Yes, I think so," Reggie murmured.
"In the matter of poor Meyer. Mr. Tromp came along wanting to buy in a hurry. The copies weren't all ready. You had to play for time. So a burglary suggested itself. And you arranged to throw the suspicion on

Meyer. Couldn't you work it with him there? Or did you want to get rid of him? Perhaps he'd come to know too much? You won't tell me? Well, well, he may have an idea. I suppose you had fitted him out with that trick suit-case for other little jobs. You planted the Merovingian clasp in it and the cipher and packed him off to Paris and got the collection away to Arch that same night and announced the burglary. Very neat. It was all working out prettily. Only we read the cipher rather too quickly. Your idea was to make it out yourself after Arch had done his job. It must have been a nasty jar when you rang up Arch's place this morning and heard he hadn't come back. You see, we got down yesterday in time to see you on Warning Camp with him settling the place. So we watched and caught him burying the stuff. It'll be very interestin' to hear Arch's defence when he's charged with the burglary."

Sir Henry plucked at his lip with shaking fingers. "Why-why-why are you so hostile?" his voice went high. "Really, this is bitterly prejudiced against me. You turn everything to insult me. Of course, it's clear this man Arch is a rascal. He steals my collection. He fabricates these forgeries to secure the originals for himself. But I am not to be involved in his villainy."

"That's what you'll say, is it?" said

Reggie. "I thought so."

"Lomas!" Sir Henry caught at him. "My dear Lomas-you've known me for many years. You won't allow this, my dear friend."

"Yes. You would try that," said

Reggie.

"We've had enough, Exon," Lomas frowned. "It's for the Public Prosecutor and a jury now. You'd better not talk any

more. Take him away, Bell."

The old man was led out tottering and whining. Mr. Tromp turned from the sight. Mr. Tromp made a gesture of despair. "Well, gentlemen, I wasn't feeling tender to him myself. But look at that. It gets you."

Reggie stood up. "Not me. No," he said. "I wasn't thinkin' of him; I'm

thinkin' of Meyer."

Mr. Tromp looked at him with something of awe. "Î've got to hand it to you, sir. But you're hard."

"Oh no, no," Reggie said. "I'm for the weak. I'm for the man that's wronged. That's all."

BAD PAW.

T'M really quite all right. Still, Missis thinks She must have hurt me ("Dreffle sorry, Binks!"), And wants to kiss the place and make a fuss; I'll let her, though it's so ridiculous. Had it been Master-precious lot he'd say, Unless "You nuisance—always in the way!" I shan't forget the last time that he stepped Right on my tail—I just laid down and wept. But Missis, bless her !--why, I didn't know She'd even touched me till she told me so. Still, tea-time's coming, and I think I saw Out in the kitchen scrumptious cakes! Oh lor! If I limp round and try to look upset Missis will—Bother! Which paw?... I forget!

JOE WALKER.

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

7HEN Wimperley came to college, he was a lean, anæmic, undersized youth with sloping shoulders and a decided stoop. His clothes, made by a country tailor, hung upon him loosely. His eyes, which were weak and watery, had a curious fashion of blinking rapidly at stated intervals. His face was thin and narrow, with a small sensitive mouth. Among the men who were taking lectures during his first year, Wimperley seemed a thing apart, apparently any communicable quality by which to cultivate friends or even acquaintanceship. He had been worsted by the tough brown fields of his father's farm, and it was hard to imagine that any alternative success lay before him.

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As time passed he drew more and more into himself. At lectures he would sit motionless, leaning a little forward, his big, hunted-looking eyes staring at the professors in utter abstraction. To observe him one would conclude that such concentration must be reflected in his papers, but effort apparently awarded him nothing, and he plodded along somewhere near the bottom.

In sports it was much the same. Wimperley would haunt the football field, even at practice, like an admiring ghost whose spirit was caught up in the game but to whose wraith-like body the sharing of it was impossible. At matches he was transformed, and ran up and down the lines like a rabbit, piping out a shrill and trembling support in a manner that would have been ridiculous were it not so pathetically in earnest. And it was at one glorious contest in which victory was snatched at the last moment that the soul of Wimperley found its avatar.

The whistle had blown and its sound been lost in a tumult of cheers. The teams were immediately engulfed in a swarm of shouting men, when Brewster, on whose brawny shoulders had rested most of the burden of the day, parted the crowd like a swimmer and came loping off the field. He was grinning broadly and seemed very happy. As he reached the side lines little Wimperley stood immediately in front of him, his small visage pale with excitement, his weak eyes suffused with irrepressible emotion.

Brewster, seeing him, had a sudden desire to laugh—then, with a certain royal abandon, slapped him on the back. There was a vigour in the slap that nearly upset Wimperley, but the latter didn't feel it. He was only conscious of a certain magnificent comradeship in Brewster's face and of a big deep voice that boomed:

"Great match, old man, wasn't it?"

Then the hero moved on.

In that very hour was born a worship that lasted for the next three years. It was as though something had been unsealed in Wimperley and he poured at Brewster's feet a supreme and unquestioning devotion. The thing was ridiculous and perhaps pathetic—but it grew.

It seemed that Wimperley had been starving for something or somebody on which to waste himself; and not having found it previously, his oblations were now the more fervid.

Brewster saw it all—it being too obvious not to be seen—and accepted it with a carelessness that would have been cruel were it not so completely satisfying to Wimperley—who asked for nothing. To be near Brewster was quite sufficient—to carry his messages was a privilege. It wasn't that Wimperley made room in his life for this—it was his life. The incarnation of what he himself had longed to be—such was his hero. Brewster was rich—Wimperley was poor; Brewster was a physical demigod—

Wimperley was weak and dwarfed; Brewster had hosts of friends—Wimperley had none. Out of this Wimperley constructed that which carried him through the next three years in a day-dream of homage. Brewster, when chaffed about it, would laugh and say that the little chap was harmless and must be left alone. But no one ever chaffed Wimperley in the matter. The altar he had raised was so real to him that in a queer reflex way its reality was plain to all.

The thing was consummated immediately before they went down, when Brewster got Wimperley into his rooms and tried to say how much he appreciated the help the little man had given him in the past years, after which he made him accept some keepsake and felt rather a fool. What Wimperley said is not on record, for Brewster would not repeat it, but the little man went away treading on air, his head held very high, as though the gods had summoned him to Olympus, if only for an hour. Then Brewster started on a long-promised trip round the world and Wimperley went back with his dreams to the Midlands. It was said that, having made a poor fist at his arts course, he was about to try medicine.

Six years later, almost to a day, Brewster's safari emerged from the African forest, and hauled its weary length across a ragged clearing. The clearing was on the bank of a river that slipped blackly into Lake Albert Nyanza. Brewster had come up the Congo and, outfitting at Stanley Pool, struck across country, meaning to debouch on the shores of Victoria Nyanza and take rail thence to Mombassa. He was now four months out, and had had his fill of equatorial Africa.

Fixing his eyes on the glistening back of the porter whose lithe body swayed immediately in front of him, he wondered what fatuous whim had brought him where he was. Africa in former days had symbolised the land of big game—romance, and changing. vivid interest. But Brewster had not taken into his reckoning the ceaseless drain on body and spirit. Swamp and malaria, the pest of flies, the tepid heat of choking jungle -the death that lurked beneath frond and fern, the abyss of silence broken only by strange calls from invisible places and the chatter of his porters—all these had fostered in him a revolt. He yearned for clean linen, cold baths, electric light, and the communicable hum of a city. This clearing. where exotic life was already reaching

toward the sun, this moist earth, festering with multiplied growths, the black ribbon of water that moved so sluggishly, only deepened his aversion. And just then the leading porter pointed to a motionless figure on the bank.

"White man!" he grunted.

Brewster stared with a queer lump in his throat. He had not seen a white man for weeks. As he stared, the curtain of memory shot up and down again with mystifying velocity. The figure was utterly ragged. A large and battered pith helmet eclipsed a narrow, brown face. It came so far down that its rim had pressed the ears sharply outward, and there was given the grotesque appearance of a hooded beetle that had developed preternatural organs of hearing. He wore a canvas shirt open at the neck. and baggy riding breeches in which legs and flanks were utterly lost. His thin shanks were wound lightly with strips of fabric. The man looked deserted and detached. a way he was part of the picture, but he seemed to have moved out beyond its frame.

He came over very quickly and, apparently without a trace of surprise, held out his hand.

"Hullo, Brewster," he piped.

Looking back at the hours that immediately followed, Brewster always remembered that they were devoted, so to speak, to reconstructing a college on the banks of a nameless African river. The element of astonishment somehow did not exist, and in an extraordinarily short time they had fallen back into previous and relative positions. Wimperley had very little to offer, but he laid it on his rediscovered altar with positive delight, and Brewster accepted it with just the off-handed ease he had always exhibited.

Both had changed a good deal. Brewster bore the marks of exposure, and carried not an ounce of superfluous weight. His eyes were set deeper, and he looked twice his age. His skin, now a brick-red, was drawn rather tightly over the cheek-bones, and he moved with a slow deliberation. The ceaseless effort of past months had told on him seriously.

With Wimperley the bodily change was not so noticeable, but there had been developed in him something which drew Brewster's eyes from his glass of lukewarm whisky and water and fastened them inquiringly on the little man. It was as though Wimperley, lacking the object of his former worship, had found some inward substitute to animate his frail person. Brewster, with a certain weary interest,



"'Hullo, Brewster,' he piped."

realised this. He saw that Wimperley had discovered food for his soul.

They mutually drifted back to college days. There was a good deal of diffidence in the way in which Wimperley spoke of them, and Brewster, noting it, took the plunge.

"And after that, what did you do?"

"Well, you know, or perhaps you don't remember, that I did not make out very well with my arts course. But I wanted to do something with myself, so I took up medicine. I had four years of that—and then got this berth." There was a touch of pride in the thin voice.

"Yes-but-what is this berth?"

"I'm a medical missionary." Wimperley coloured a little. "I thought perhaps you'd guessed." He hesitated and, taking off his helmet, wiped a damp brow. His eyes had become very soft.

"Yes," put in Brewster, "I'd like to

know."

There was a long pause.

"Well," began the other, "it was something like this. Very soon after I got to college, I found out that the things I'd hoped for were impossible—quite. Not that it mattered much—but it wasn't exactly easy. You see, I wanted to contribute everything I could to college life and do all I could for it, and it seemed right away that the sort of thing I could contribute wasn't wanted, and anything I could do was already being done ever so much better by other fellows—so I felt rather choked—and out of it—and I had to give myself in some way."

Brewster nodded silently. No question

there.

"So that," continued the thin voice, "was why I——" He broke off and stared toward the river where Brewster's porters were pitching his ventilating tent. "Won't you put up in my shack?"

Brewster clapped him on the shoulder just

as he had done once before.

"You're going to put up with me. My commissariat is in extra good order."

Wimperley smiled quite happily, then went on. "You see, at college, you were the only one who let me do anything for you—and after I left the feeling was still there. I felt, too, that the next time I didn't want to be thanked, so the only thing to do was to find those who didn't know that anything was being done for them. So I came out here. You know," he added with a sudden flush of pride, "it's really

fascinating—that is, all excepting the sickness."

Brewster leaned forward.

"What is it?"

"Why, sleeping sickness—rinderpest, they call it in cattle. It's got up here somehow and——" His words trailed out, while he stared across the river at the solid rampart of jungle that halted abruptly on the steep clay banks. His eyes took on a curious fullness. It seemed he had set up communication with something in that humid wilderness, between which and himself there was a voiceless entente. "I'm doing what I can," he concluded softly.

The big man experienced uncontrollable loathing. "I didn't know it came up this

far."

"Nor did I—but"—Wimperley broke off again—"it's pretty bad now, down there." He jerked his chin toward the conical roofs of a village. "I forgot you didn't know about it. It seems queer that anyone could not know."

Brewster glanced at him swiftly. He hesitated to believe that Wimperley could be willing to spend an avoidable hour in this sweating, death-stricken place; but there was that in the small face which was too

exalted to be misleading.

"You see," continued the piping voice, "in a queer way, I've found myself here. I know it wouldn't do for anyone else—at least for very few—but there's something in it that satisfies me. You don't mind if I talk out a bit, do you?—it's not often that anyone drops in."

"For God's sake, no. Talk! You surely

don't think-"

"You always understood," interrupted Wimperley gently. "You were about the only one at college that did. Now if you like, we'll go down to the village. It's a little cooler, and it won't be quite so—so awful."

Brewster heaved himself up. "All right,"

he said jerkily.

"I think it's about at its worst now." Wimperley's voice was quite level. "One difficulty is that I have so little to give them. Some strychnia—for the heart, you know, and quinine; but they will make no effort themselves."

As they entered the village Brewster's spirit recoiled. A deadly drowsiness was here. An irregular avenue of mimosa and pandanus paralleled the stream, and on one side, facing the river, were the huts. It was the evening hour, and elsewhere in Africa

there would have been laughter and movement and the chatter of voices. But here there was only silence. Plague—irrepressible and insidious—had fallen over the place. Outside the huts the blacks lay in utter lassitude. There was a stretching of languid limbs, an occasional querulous moan, a rolling of glazed and almost sightless eyes.

Singly and in groups they waited for the inevitable. At the door of one hut a huge-bodied giant was curled like a dog, his muscles still slack, but with a greyish pallor spreading slowly over his ebony skin.

Beside him a woman crooned, while she

yielded imperceptibly to fate.

Down the broad road, trampled smooth by the pad-pad of noiseless, naked feet, Brewster forced himself unwillingly. Dissolution was all around him. It quivered in the black and slimy water, it moved breathlessly in the forest, where twisted lianas grappled with a multitude of tall, straight trunks and were choking the life out of their feathered tops. A lump rose in his throat.

"Let's get back," he blurted.

Wimperley glanced at him with a touch of surprise.

"I've got to go my rounds," he said apologetically, "and they seem to like it when I come along. That is, if you don't mind."

Brewster made a grimace and walked on. So great was the unreality of this sinister moment that he tried to put it aside as a dream. There was Wimperley, stooping over ebony heathens who looked at him languidly and swallowed what he gave them -Wimperley who had apparently found in this pest-ridden jungle that which the outside world had denied him. The thing about it was that he displayed no nervousness, nor did there seem anything strange in the whole In all his life Brewster had never met a man more exactly suited to this kind of work. He had read of similar occasions, but there was no heaving of stricken bodies, no moaning, no whisper from the jungle to drive the point home.

"How long has this been going on?"
He put the question automatically. It might indeed have always been going on.

might indeed have always been going on. "About a month." There was a quality in the voice suggesting that that part of it didn't much matter.

Brewster yielded a little to a curious wave of drowsiness inhaled from a near-by hut. "I suppose it doesn't attack white people?"

he said lazily, then with a jerk brought himself back. Wimperley was peering at him with a sudden anxiety in his weak eyes.

"We'd better go back now." He spoke quite sharply. "You're about tuckered

Calling the head man of the village, who was bent, shrivelled and immune to that which brought down those of fuller blood, he gave a few directions in Basuto, and marched Brewster to his tent. It was borne to the latter that for some reason or other he must do exactly what Wimperley told him, Wimperley who was so perfectly at home in this ghastly setting. To-morrow he would root him out of it and take him on to Mombassa—or, and this would be more like playing the game, he would wait over till the sickness passed, and then they would go out together.

Thirty grains of quinine did the trick, and he woke later to find Wimperley watching him with the dog-like homage of former

years.

"You're all right now," said the little man cheerfully: then, wistfully: "You've never told me what you've been doing since college."

Brewster thought hard. He had a swift impression that this sweating hole in the jungle encompassed qualities of startling beauty.

"Not half as much as you've done."

Wimperley shook his head. "This doesn't amount to anything, and somehow I've always thought of you—as"—he faltered a little—"as being a part of things in general. That was what made me make such a nuisance of myself at college." He thrust this out as though anxious that Brewster should realise that he saw he had been a nuisance.

"For God's sake-don't!"

Wimperley started. "You didn't feel that way?" There was a little lift in his voice.

It came to Brewster that here and now he must be painfully truthful. "I didn't understand it at first," he began awkwardly, "and the fellows joked about it, but the second year I saw how much in earnest you were, and the third year it was—well—just a part of my college life. I realised, too, that I wasn't exactly the kind of man you thought you were helping, and—"

"But you were—and are," put in Wim-

perley softly.

Brewster shook his head. "Anyway, I tried to tell you before we came down. I

meant it too." added he under his breath.

There followed a pause during which Wimperley seemed to be threatened by some unlooked-for emotion, so brightly did his eyes shine.

anything so tender. It was as though an inward prayer had been magnificently answered, and his soul had found comforting and eternal sustenance. He looked no longer grotesque and pathetic, but a potent wraith who for a time had chosen this



" for I've often wondered whether you quite meant it—all of it. I'm glad, too, that you happened to come through this way, and that I've seen you, if only for a day. I shan't have to go back so far now for something to think about."

Brewster moved uncomfortably. "I'm going to stick it out here till the sickness is over; then you're coming on with me."

The thin face became suddenly transfigured with a gentle radiance. Staring at him, Brewster thought he had never seen suffocating space in which to work a beneficent purpose.

Simultaneously the silence seemed invaded by the spirit of the jungle. Mysterious sounds became audible, drifting across the sucking wisp of the black water as it slid slackly against its greasy banks. There were voices, tiny and multitudinous, that ceased abruptly at sharp cracklings, and bell-like notes that floated throbbing through the tangled canopy. An extraordinary

dusk with wide-membraned wings. And of all this little Wimperley seemed a natural and necessary part. Presently his eyes found Brewster's and held them.



"He waved his helmet. Brewster did the same, and with a sudden choking turned away."

sense of movement was abroad in the gloom, of teeming life that pushed and crawled and stepped softly and winnowed through the "It's—it's tremendously kind of you," he said slowly, "but of course that wouldn't do."

" Why?"

"It isn't part of the general scheme—and up here that's about the whole thing—the general scheme. Perhaps you don't know what it means just to have you want to stay. I'm afraid I couldn't make that clear."

"But why shouldn't I stay?" Brewster's voice had a touch of defiance, but to

himself it was suggestively hollow.

"It's hard to explain without seeming false to the things I believe in; but it would be a—a waste. That doesn't sound just right, I know. You see the world has so much waiting for you," he paused, then concluded quite simply, "while it hasn't anything for me."

Brewster caught his breath. It was true that the world had much waiting for him; as much, practically, as he desired to take.

"So I just want to establish what we might call the old régime," went on Wimperley with a smile, "you doing the big things that you're able to do, and myself just plodding along with the little ones. It's the same thing over again, but perhaps this time I'll be a little more useful. It's just like you to want to stay, but—if you got sick yourself——"

His voice lowered, and his eyes dwelt on Brewster with a new apprehension. "That wouldn't be fair to the general scheme—would it? And now, if you don't mind, I'm going down to the village. These particular Bantus will only bury their dead at night, and they seem to want me to be there."

He slipped off, and Brewster lay on his back, peering at the dim ridge-pole of the tent, picturing Wimperley in that smitten village, picturing the ebony giant as he gradually disappeared in the moist, black earth. It was all hideously unreal, but by some remote channel he himself had come to the parting of the ways—and he knew it. And Wimperley—Wimperley was footing it down the cushioned road to the place of death, his gaze fixed unseeingly on the conical roofs that showed indistinctly ahead, his breath coming in irregular gusts, while his whole soul was lifted in a whispered and ecstatic appeal.

"Oh, God," he pleaded, "oh, God, make

him stay."

It was early on the second morning when Brewster's safari moved out and struck through a clump of tamarinds towards the edge of the great plateau that lifted to the east. The steps that led to his decision were, as Wimperley earnestly assured him, more than logical. Another sweating day had passed and three more Bantus had entered the jungle never to reappear. Just as soon as there were enough able-bodied men the villagers would desert this abode of When he heard it, Brewster had visions of what the village would be six months later, with young cassias sprouting through the limp roofs, and mimosas thrusting sunward on the padded road. It had seemed that Wimperley was inevitably right, and that there was nothing left but to move on. So, very deliberately, and with something stirring in his soul that he easily identified but would not admit, he unpacked his kit and forced upon the protesting little man all but bare necessities for the journey out. When he had finished there was a pile of things, leather and metal, the futile oblation of a craven spirit.

"And now," he said, "what is there I can do for you—or send you from outside?"

Wimperley smiled. "Nothing—you've already done more by just coming this way than I ever thought possible. Our travelling inspector will be along next month, and they're all really very kind to me. You see," he added, "I couldn't take any salary for this, and that seems to make them want to do all they can, although it isn't the sort of service one could very well sell. I—I think your head porter is a little restless."

He shot this out jerkily, and it suddenly seemed to Brewster as though the little man had for the past few hours been detaching himself, as it were, in sections, that at the last the break might not be more than he could bear. So, quite silently, they struck off across the cornfield to where the grumbling safari stretched its sinuous length at the edge of the forest.

A hundred yards from the bush a giant tree fern was swaying languidly, and here

Wimperley halted.

"I hope you'll have a good trip," he said quite evenly. "The weather will be better on the uplands, and you should strike Victoria Nyanza in two weeks at the latest. If you get a chance to put in a good word for the medical mission, I'm sure you will, and when "—here he stammered a little, with a touch of old-time nervousness—"and when you think of me it must be of one who's quite happy—quite." Then he added, "And God bless you, old man, always."

From the shadow of the jungle Brewster looked back. The little man was standing quite motionless. Above him the giant

fern lifted its huge fronds like an immense and prodigal wreath. He waved his helmet. Brewster did the same, and with a sudden

choking turned away.

Moments passed, but Wimperley did not stir. He was peering into the lane that had swallowed his friend. There came to him the snapping of a branch, the laugh of a porter, and then silence, that silence which breathes over the equatorial jungle when the sun smites hard. His eyes were wistful, and in them moved a strange hunger. His face was the face of one who, worshipping long at some hidden altar, and finding one day that it has burned out, worships the more, and with new and sacrificial ecstasy.

He had poured out his spirit—and not in vain.

Came the sound of feet running across the clearing, and the voice of the aged headman calling to him as he approached. Fear was graven deep on the wrinkled face.

"To the village, Master, hasten, for there

is great need."

It seemed to Wimperley that something snapped inside him. He had the sensation of being readjusted by invisible forces that worked swiftly and very certainly. He drew a long breath.

"I am coming, brother," he answered in the Basuto tongue. "I am coming—have

courage."

FOR DEAD LINNETH.

SHE was as white as thorn trees
That blossom in the Spring;
She was as white as sloe bloom
In March, and she did sing
As sweet as any throstle
In April carolling.

She walked the lilied meadows

A little slim princess;

Bright things would bring her hunger

And thirsting none could guess;

And mortal shows about her

Would hold her in duress.

But now her feet no longer

Walk any troubled way,

Who stays in her dark chamber

Under the tarnished spray,

Whose lips are locked of singing

From every day to day.

She that was white as thorn trees
That blossom in the Spring;
She that was sweet as throstles
At happy carolling.
And now the heart is likely
To break . . . remembering.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

THE DATCHLEY • INHERITANCE •

FAREWELL TO ADVENTURE

By STEPHEN McKENNA

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

6

F all who gyrated, on the first Tuesday afternoon of last July, in car, cab or omnibus round Parliament Square, few can have considered that the young couple emerging from the carpeted and awninged doorway of Saint Margaret's, Westminster, differed in any essentials from the young couples who had already faced the clicking cameras that week, or would face them the following week, against the same background of interested idlers, in the same unsparing sunshine, with the same smiles of idiot self-satisfaction.

Bride and bridegroom, on this occasion, were young; but marrying, like riding to hounds or skiing, is a thing to be learned in youth or not at all. They were also good-looking; but, of our charity, we say that every bride "looked lovely" and that every wedding was "pretty" until we see them reproduced in society papers. And, even in an age of journalistic candour, no letterpress has yet insisted that a bride was fully as plain, a bridegroom as monstrously malformed, as they commonly appear from their photographs. stranger eye, therefore, Bryan Abbotsford, in his lavender waistcoat and yellow gloves, his white spats and sponge-bag trousers, his vast buttonhole and vaster satin stock, appeared, albeit his new silk hat had been rubbed the wrong way, in no respect more remarkable than any other of the season's bridegrooms. The passers-by who observed him must have been startled to read, that night or next morning, that their transient gaze had fallen upon a multimillionaire and that the last word had been written in the history of the Datchley inheritance.

Six months before, they may have recollected, old John Datchley had died alone and unnoticed, like a rat behind wainscoting; and the world had paused for a moment to wonder how his estate would be distributed. The gossips narrated that he was eccentric and difficult, that he had quarrelled with all his relations and that his money would probably go to charity. Then the world moved on to livelier speculations; and Datchley was forgotten. When his will was filed at Somerset House, the press remembered him again for a moment; but his fortune was in trust, his heir had still to come forward.

And now, these late wayfarers through Parliament Square may have reflected, the estate was at last changing hands. The young man with the fair, long hair and pink cheeks had inherited four and a half million pounds; and, when the figures had been rolled appreciatively round the tongue, the whole subject could be dismissed. Of the part played by Bryan Abbotsford—sometimes daring, occasionally unscrupulous and once macabre—the general public naturally knew nothing; of the tragi-comic history made by his unsuccessful rivals it naturally suspected nothing.

I fancy, nevertheless, it was the tragicomedy which I have been chronicling in these pages that engaged the thoughts—in Westminster or farther afield—of six or eight rather silent and subdued young Fairfaxes, Abbotsfords and Gauntletts at this season. It prevented one or two from attending. It kept the survivors pensive as we drove from the church to the reception.

"Well, Mr. Plimsoll, we gave the old

boy a good run for his money," Luke Abbotsford, the best man, murmured at last. "He must have been amused if he's been watching us all this time."

Four millions and more for the grandson who married first and took the name of Datchley: I thought over the guileless phrasing of the old man's codicil and wondered for the hundredth time whether it was stupidity or malevolence that had led him to devise this insane and unseemly competition.

"At any rate there are no hearts broken," I said. "And Bryan is providing so generously for you all that the laugh is on his side at the end. . . . In some ways I'm sorry it's all over. My practice will seem very prosaic after this."

"Well, you can count on Bryan to infuse a little poetry into it from time to time," Luke answered as we reached the door of the bride's house.

II.

The crowd at the reception was overwhelming; and, as is the way of crowds where I am concerned, the tide of elbowing, redfaced imbeciles—if indeed, as I maintain, it be imbecility to attend a wedding for pleasure -flowed and ebbed in perfect rhythm with my own movements. When the cake was cut and I edged away to look at the presents, the crowd edged with me; when I doubled back in the hope of discovering a drink less deleterious on a July afternoon than tepid champagne, the crowd followed in my And, when Bryan murmured: "If you want a quiet place for a cigar, try my dressing-room," the crowd chorussed: "Oh, thank you," and came too.

Not until the bride had retired to change her dress did I get a moment to present the settlement and will for the bridegroom to sign.

"And I must see you as soon as the honeymoon's over," I added. "You're going to the Italian Lakes?"

"We start to-morrow. Too much of a rush to get off to-day." He stared unhappily at the gleaming rows of presents, which were being lifted from their trestletables along the walls and down the middle of the library and stowed in packing-cases. The friends on both sides had acted on the universal principle that, as these young people were going to be rich beyond calculation, they must be given everything that they could have afforded and would have preferred to buy for themselves. "There's a month's work, thanking for this stuff alone."

"Send out a printed acknowledgement," I suggested, "and write at your leisure."

"Oh, I've arranged all that. I wish we'd put 'No presents, by request', though. Twenty-seven cigarette-boxes, eleven cocktail-sets, forty-two clocks . . . It's rather absurd . . ."

"You can always sell them," I said.
"And give the proceeds to the poor. A load or two for your cousin Hilary to divide among the students at the Biological Institute . . ."

Bryan's brows met in a frown, as though he had just recalled that Hilary Fairfax had not seen fit to grace the wedding or the reception. When I told Luke that there were no hearts broken, I ought to have remembered that there was one wound unhealed. Hilary, by the latest advices, was recovering, from a nervous breakdown which he attributed to the malignant persecution of his Abbotsford cousins; but the olive-branches which Bryan tendered had been thrown back in his face.

"Master Hilary doesn't take a beating in good part," he murmured; "and he doesn't make the best of a bad job. If he'd shaken hands with me to-day, like the rest, it would have meant fifty thousand in his pocket, but he prefers to send a message that he'll starve before he accepts anything from me or crosses my threshold. Well, well! I'm spared one letter, because he hasn't sent me a present, but these others! I don't know what to do with them! People are so frightfully hurt when they come to your house and don't see their own precious paper-knife. We had eighteen of them, by the way."

"Then I can only suggest that you pay some one to burgle you. What are you doing, by the way, with all this stuff while you're abroad?"

"We're sending the good things to the bank. The rubbish is being stored till we've got a house." Bryan looked at his watch and beckoned to the detective who was hovering by the loaded cases. "If the vans have come, the men may as well begin to cart these things away. You're taking charge, aren't you?"

The detective bowed:

"I shall go round to the bank myself, sir. The other things . . . ?"

If Bryan had not in fact arranged to part with four-fifths of these useless encumbrances, he had divided them with unerring



on board," he answered. "Don't you bother. . . . Well, sir, I feel rather like a bath and a change of clothes," he continued to me. "You wouldn't care to bring these papers up to my room while I dress? Then if there's any business we can polish off . . ." He sighed wearily, then sprang up suddenly with the light of inspiration in his eyes. "Excuse me a moment! I must speak to Martin."

While he darted in pursuit of his brother,

whether he would like our consulta-

tion postponed until he was less on edge.

"I'm sorry," he answered. "I couldn't think what that noise was. It's only the van driving off to the bank. Now, you were saying . . . ? "

I went back to the beginning of my explanation and repeated my arguments until I saw once more that he was not listening. This time there was more excuse, as an altercation had broken out downstairs and the sound of excited voices made it difficult for us to hear each other.

"I'd better see what the row's about," said Bryan, slipping his arms into the sleeves of an old tweed coat.

As he did not return and as the altercation continued unabated, I followed him, five minutes later, into the hall and found a scene of such pandemonium that for several minutes I could find no one to tell me what had happened. Men in baize aprons were declaiming to men in tall hats and morning coats; the hired waiters were justifying

apron brigade who was letting it be known, with some difficulty of articulation, that, if the butler wanted a thick ear, he was going the right way to get it.

"Gennleman arst us t'drink 'is 'ealth!"

"He didn't ask you to make beasts of yourselves. Twelve bottles, among five!" the butler shrilled.

"But what's this about a hold-up?" I shouted above the din.

The butler, the hired waiters, the baizeaprons and a sprinkling of the weddingguests began to enlighten me simultaneously.



themselves to an incredulous and affronted butler; and a composite group of porters, wedding-guests, waiters and footmen were engaged in what appeared to be an attempt to tear down the front door.

"What on earth's the matter?" I demanded.

"A hold-up of sorts," Luke Abbotsford replied calmly. "The vanmen had just finished loading up . . ."

"Loading up!," the butler echoed bitterly.
"That's just about what they were doing!"

Luke suspended his explanation to placate a huge and hirsute member of the baize"You see, sir, Bryan offered these men a drink . . ."

"The pantry's their proper place, not the dining-room . . ."

"Gennleman arst us t'drink 'is 'ealth"

"And while they were all inside . . ."
"Leaving the van, Mr. Plimsoll, sir!

Leaving it!"

"Gennleman told us to make ourselves at

"Gennleman told us to make ourselves at ome . . ."

"Glass o' beer is one thing. I'd have carried it out to you myself. These waiters! Coming in by the day! They don't know and they don't care!"

The hired waiters, on that word, transferred their allegiance to the baize-aprons, with whom I suspected they had already been sharing Bryan's hospitality:

"Young gentleman said they was to 'elp

themselves . . ."

With the vehemence of a conductor peating the last chord of a finale, Luke forced

his jangling orchestra to silence.

"While they were all in the dining-room," he continued, "some one turned the key on them. It wasn't till they shouted to be let out that we suspected anything. And then we found we were all prisoners! The door into the area was locked and the key gone. And the front door has been fastened in some way from the outside. Hullo!"

He held up his hand for silence; and I heard a heavy engine starting. A hoot, of warning or triumph, was borne faintly through the shut door; and, when we hurried to the windows of the dining-room, we saw the back of a pantechnicon lumbering round the corner.

Leaving Luke to maintain peace, I telephoned to the nearest police-station, giving what particulars I could and asking to have an officer sent round at once to set us free and to take charge of the case. Then I telephoned to the London and Suburban Removal and Storage Company, requesting news of the missing pantechnicon when anything was heard of it and asking in the meantime to have the driver and porters removed before they came to blows with the servants. Mrs. Halliday and Brenda were, fortunately, resting upstairs; but no one had seemed willing to assume responsibility in their absence.

To the credit of the police, a constable was on the doorstep within five minutes, cutting the cord with which the handle had been tied to the area railings. A small, excited man appeared twenty minutes later, repeating like an article of faith that "a thing like a pantechnicon could not disappear and disclaiming responsibility on behalf of his firm unless a receipt for the cases could be produced. I explained all I could to the constable, explained it a second time to a detective-inspector and a third time to the representative of the storage company. Then, almost word-perfect, I went upstairs and described the robbery to Mrs. Halliday and Brenda. The time was then six o'clock; and, as I entered the room, I heard through the open window:

"Daring Daylight Robbery! Speshul!"
My tale was hardly told before the butler,

still darkly flushed from recent altercation, came in to say that Mr. Bryan was wanted on the telephone.

"Well, you'd better tell him," said Mrs.

Halliday.

"I can't find him, ma'am."
Brenda sprang to her feet.

"Can't find him?" she repeated.

"No, miss. No, ma'am, I should say.

I've searched 'igh and low."

As I saw the colour flooding out of Brenda's cheeks, I wished that I had not used in her hearing Luke's phrase about "a hold-up of sorts". In her anguished eyes I could see hideous visions of Bryan garrotted, Bryan sandbagged, Bryan lying in a pool of blood with his head crushed.

"When was he last seen?" she de-

nanded.

"We were in his room when the trouble began," I said. "He rushed down to investigate. . . . I should think, while the others were talking, he started in pursuit. He's all *right*, Brenda. If he'd come to any harm, we should have found traces of it. As he's not in the house . . ."

"Are the police still here?" she inter-

rupted. "I must tell them!"

⁷ And in the meantime I'd better see who's on the telephone. Was there any name? "I asked the butler.

"Mr. Hilary Fairfax, sir. I'll put him

through to you here."

A moment later I was explaining once more that a domestic upset had occurred and that Bryan was not at the moment accessible.

"If he won't come to the telephone, I shall jump straight into a taxi and come to the house," an indignant voice threatened.

"But he's not here," I said. "What's the

matter?"

"Matter?" The indignant voice rose and choked. "I've stood a lot, but he's gone too far this time."

"I don't understand a word of what you're saying," I interrupted. "Won't you

begin at the beginning?"

Though Hilary Fairfax was some way east of the British Museum and I perhaps half a mile west of Lancaster Gate, I heard panting as of a man with a weak heart who has been running upstairs.

"Certainly. 'Tell you everything," he answered with a sob. "When I came into my rooms, I found this card. Can you hear? 'Sorry to miss you. I have left a few trifles for you in the hall of the Biological Institute. If you can't use them yourself, they may come

in handy for your pupils, or you can convert them into cash.' I went round . . ."

It is useless to interrupt a speaker on the telephone unless you know what you want to say; and, though I made Hilary pause, I did not know whether I wanted first to tell Mrs. Halliday that the mystery of the pantechnicon was explained or to assure Brenda that her husband was safe or to begin gilding the pill which we must shortly administer to the police. It was on my hints, unhappily, that Bryan had been inspired to act. . . .

his voice fell to the toneless murmur of a man checking an inventory. "Fourteen, sixteen, eighteen paper-knives. Twenty-four, thirty-six, forty-two clocks. Nine, ten, eleven cocktail-sets . . ."

As I did not feel that I could do any more, I hung up the receiver. The Biological Institute is one of the dreariest buildings in London. Its staff and students are some of the dismallest human beings in the world. I felt disposed to hope that Bryan's largesse, however unexpected, would brighten their rather drab lives.



When was he last seen?' she demanded."

"I went round," repeated Hilary, his voice rising to a scream. "He calls them a few trifles! There were cases of things, piled up all over the floor. Silver, glass, china, books . . . And two policemen. One of them kept the door; and the other asked me if I'd be kind enough to explain it all! . . . I hadn't had time to change out of my laboratory clothes; and they wouldn't believe me when I told them who I was "

"You should have shewn them the card," I broke in.

"A few 'trifles'?" raged Hilary. Then

III.

In my professional career I have had many dealings with the police; and I have always found that the quickest way of winning their good-will is by a blend of candour and generosity. I took the detective-inspector into the library, gave him a whiskey-and-soda and a cigar and told him that, as I had instructed him in the first instance, I should be much obliged if he would let me instruct him again.

"The missing cases have come to light," I told him.

He looked faintly chagrined.

"The pantechnicon identified, I suppose, sir? I broadcast your description all over London."

"I can't tell you anything about the pantechnicon, but I fancy it suited some one's convenience that people should think these cases had been stolen."

The inspector eyed me stonily, as though the cigar and drink put him at a disadvantage.

"In other words, sir, it was all a plant?

Locking the door . . .'

"Oh, the men were shut into the diningroom, the front-door was tied up. And some one certainly borrowed the pantechnicon."

"You may call it 'borrowing', sir. . . . Seems to me, some one's been making fools of us."

His tone warned me to handle him

tenderly.

"You must blame me if I misled you, but it was done in good faith. I never suspected it was a 'plant'; but, on my soul! I can sympathize with people who take drastic steps to get rid of presents they don't want. Every year a client of mine sends me a haunch of venison. I don't eat venison. I often wish the railway people weren't so honest. . . . A drop more whiskey in that soda?"

"Well, I missed my tea over this racket," grumbled the inspector. "What is it you want me to do now?" he continued after

a profitable pause.

"Isn't it the only thing to do? You can't charge a man with stealing his own wedding-presents. And a man in Mr. Abbotsford's position wouldn't wish to come by a pantechnicon dishonestly. If he wanted one at all, he could buy it. Within the next few weeks he'll be a millionaire several times over."

"It's making a fool of me," persisted the

inspector with lingering resentment.

"Unintentionally! He couldn't know you'd be called in. And he'd be the first to apologize and make any reparation in his power. I don't know whether the police-orphanage . . .," I continued, fingering a five-pound note. "You see, if we can part friends and hush the thing up, nobody's injured and you will be doing my young friend a great service. If the story comes out, the papers will treat it as a hoax on the police; and this boy will be in a very awkward position with all the friends whose

presents he was trying to lose. If you'll treat the thing as a joke . . ."

The inspector's underlip curled:

"I won⁷t go that far, sir. It would serve him right if all his friends sent him a fresh lot... Well, I can't answer for the *other* stations. The whole Metropolitan force is working on the description I broadcast."

To have suggested that Bryan might elude the force would have been uncomplimentary. I shook hands with the inspector and gave him another cigar to smoke when he reached home. Then I went upstairs to see if Bryan was yet returned.

"No, there's not a sign of him," Brenda told me, with a face still white. "The van

has been found . . ."

"Found?" I echoed. "Then, surely . . ."
"It was somewhere on Hampstead Heath.
The removal people have just telephoned.
It had been driven off the road and left.
Nothing inside it. Nobody near it."

"Well, I have the best reasons for thinking that Bryan hasn't come to any harm,"

I assured her.

"What d'you know that you haven't

told me?" she demanded.

I tried to say that I knew nothing. As a bachelor, I can only surmise which are the moments when a young man wishes to cut his best figure in the sight of his wife and of her relations. On the day that he proposes for her hand, on the day or days when he is paraded for their inspection, on the day when he receives her from the arms of a weeping mother and promises to keep her as the apple of his eye: then, if at no other time, he desires to achieve an effect of steadiness. To leave the aftermath of one's wedding-reception, in torn tweed jacket, check trousers and white spats, to appropriate a Croftythorne pantechnicon while its custodians waxed mellow, quarrelsome or lethargic on one's mother-in-law's champagne at the rate of something over a bottle a cheek, to convey a hundredweight or so of photograph-frames, entrée-dishes and calfbound poets to the marble hall of the Biological Institute in Bloomsbury Square, to inundate with them an unsuspecting but already hostile assistant-demonstrator and cause him to be browbeaten as a receiver of stolen goods, to drive the pirated pantechnicon to the sylvan seclusion of Hampstead, to abandon it there and to establishpresumably—an alibi at Croydon or Twickenham: all this, I felt, was an escapade wholly to Bryan's taste, it was the kind of thing he had done a dozen times before and would

do twelve dozen times again, but it was not the behaviour to win a reputation for steadiness. I wanted to say nothing until I had heard what story Bryan wished me to corroborate.

By good-fortune I was spared the necessity of saying anything. As I hesitated, the butler came in to announce that Mr. Abbotsford required me urgently on the telephone. Brenda, with a sob of relief and a murmur of "I'll go", slid from the room before I could get out of my chair; and Bryan's urgent needs had to be conveyed to me at second-hand by the butler. He passed his hand over his eyes as he spoke; and I noticed that he touched the books and ornaments within reach, as though he was not quite sure whether he was awake.

"It was you he wanted, sir," he moaned, as Brenda hurried from the room. "I don't know what's come over people to-day. Crazy! That's what they are! D'you know what they've gone and done to Mr. Bryan, sir? Locked him up! They have, sir. That blessed van! They see him somewhere near it and they arrests him. When he tells them who he is, they don't believe him. 'None o' that,' they says. 'Abbotsford all my eye,' they says. And they run him in. Oh dear, oh dear! Fancy a thing like that happening to a young gentleman on his wedding-day! He wants you to bail him out, sir."

So Bryan, after all, had failed to elude the

Metropolitan police.

"A night in the cells would do Mr. Bryan a world of good," I said, lighting a cigar.

"Sir!" exclaimed the shocked and

startled butler.

A clock began to strike seven; and I realized that, if I allowed myself to be stampeded, I was in danger of losing my dinner.

"Anyway, I don't stir from here till I've had something to eat," I continued. "If you will present my compliments to Mrs. Halliday . . ."

The butler's expression conveyed, more eloquently than any words, that he could not understand nor forgive my indecency or callousness in considering food at such a time

"Think of Miss Brenda, sir," he implored

me tremulously.

"I'm thinking of her seriously," I answered.

"Mr. Bryan has behaved abominably. I don't suppose she wants any advice from me; but, if she does, I shall recommend her

strongly to institute proceedings for divorce. Sooner or later . . ."

"On her wedding-day?" cried the butler with the sentimentality of his kind.

IV.

WHERE no charge had been brought, the question of bail-perhaps fortunately for me—did not arise. Luke Abbotsford and one of his cousins departed in haste to confirm an identity which Bryan had already established; and to the reiterated question what he was doing so strangely attired on Hampstead Heath he opposed the unanswerable questions whether he had not a perfect right to be on Hampstead Heath in any clothes he liked and whether the police proposed to bring him up on a charge of loitering suspiciously in the neighbourhood of a pantechnicon which he had himself chartered to convey his own wedding-presents from his own wife's house to a furniturerepository of his own choosing.

"And now," he requested at parting, "perhaps you will be courteous enough to telephone to this address and say that I am on my way. I hope, you may add, that they have not kept dinner back for me."

As he did not arrive until nearly nine o'clock, his hopes were not disappointed. We were at an early course of a meal for which none of us had dressed and to which few of us had been invited. Mrs. Halliday sat at one end, I at the other; and the empty places between us were filled up, as at an unpunctual table d'hôte, one by one as Bryan's allies returned from the various tasks allotted them in covering Bryan's tracks. I had appointed Martin Abbotsford press-secretary to keep at bay the reporters who followed one another in an unbroken stream. One of the Gauntlett boys undertook to calm the London and Suburban Removal and Storage Company. when one of the servants announced that "a shabby young gentleman" had called "in a rare state of mind", I rather rashly volunteered to keep Hilary Fairfax out of mischief and Mrs. Halliday quite disastrously insisted that he should be brought in and placated with dinner.

Thus it was that, when a white-faced fanatic with burning eyes commanded me to give him the explanation which I had refused by telephone, I was constrained by the added pressure of Mrs. Halliday and Brenda to comply. The troubles of that evening, I told them, were the penalty which

a pioneer had to pay in seeking a new cure for an old disease. What was one to do, I asked, with unwanted wedding-presents?

"By conveying an impression that they had been stolen in bulk," I continued, "Bryan has freed his wife and himself from all responsibility. If he has unwittingly caused inconvenience or anxiety to others, he has not spared himself. I need hardly remind you, though, that, if his efforts are not to be wholly wasted, it is essential that we keep the events of this afternoon a strictly guarded secret . . ."

What reception my plea might have been accorded I shall never know. Before any one could speak, Bryan sailed gaily in with a kiss for his wife, an apology for his motherin-law and a comprehensive greeting for the rest of us. The silence that met him would have been noticeable to a man with one quarter of his perception; and I observed him looking quickly and appraisingly from face Then his eyes fell on his outraged cousin; and he seemed to strip for battle.

"Hilary! This is a pleasant surprise! You got my chit? And the little odds and ends? I hope you'll find them useful."

"You went a shade too far to-day," whispered Hilary, as though he feared for the control of his voice.

"Your fault for living in a place like Bloomsbury, old lad! I don't grudge a little trouble, though. What brings you here? I thought you refused to grace our wedding, though I've done my best to make friends with you."

"I don't want your friendship! I'm going to break you over this! D'you

know I was nearly arrested?"

Bryan studied his menu eagerly, then looked up apologetically, as though he had forgotten his cousin in the press of more serious business:

"Nearly? I had the real thing." He broke off as the butler whispered a message, then jumped up with an expression of annoyance. "The press seems to have arrived in force. I must think of something to keep'em quiet."

"If he thinks he can 'quiet' the press ..," Hilary muttered between his teeth. "Or get round me. For months he's been laying himself out to make a fool of me."

Unexpectedly, Luke Abbotsford came to my aid in the business of "keeping Hilary

out of mischief".

"If we told the truth," he murmured, " most of us would have to admit that we'd made fools of ourselves without any help from Bryan. At least, I speak for myself. . ." "I was in the same boat," said Arthur

"I too . . . I too I too . . . ,"

added three other voices.

"I was wondering," Luke continued, "whether it wouldn't be rather amusing to get together and pool our experiences. Perhaps Mr. Plimsoll will invite us all to dine with him. If we begin by laughing at one another, we may end by laughing at ourselves. And, now that it's all over, Hilary, we haven't done so badly. If you'd only make friends with Bryan, he'd do something handsome for you."

"I have no wish to be beholden to him," Hilary answered. "Justice, not charity . . . "

"If you will dine with me," I interposed hastily, "it will give me very great pleasure. And, Hilary, for goodness' sake remember this is a festal occasion. Forget your fads and principles! Forget that champagne is a stimulant and that action and reaction are equal and opposite! Forget all about racial degeneration and the survival of the unfittest. Fill your glass, man! And, if the wine goes to your head, so much the better: we may catch you making friends with your own cousin before you have time to sober down. Come along!"

As the butler moved to the back of the chair from which he had been waved away so often that night, I heard a voice murmuring that its owner was sure he had no desire to be a wet blanket.

Luke Abbotsford leaned towards me and gripped my hand in congratulation.

You should write a book," he recommended, "and call it The Datchley Inheritance."

V.

For the moment at least Hilary Fairfax was silenced; and no further effort seemed required of me. I sat back out of the ring of candle-light, watching the young faces on either side of me. If still unwritten, the history of the Datchley inheritance was finished; and, though John Datchley might have been gratified to detect an occasionally sombre note in the laughter that now began to rise, I preferred to think that, long ere his coffin was blown skywards above the ruins of Datchley Castle, he had lost the power to gloat over his own misdeeds. could wish John Datchley no heavier punishment in any world.

Luke Abbotsford's proposal had set me thinking, not so much of my own powers and opportunities as of every one's absolute unfitness to write the story of himself or any one else. What, I wondered that night, had befallen the several women who had contributed a moment of adventure to each of these young men? I fell to dreaming of an imaginary world in which I could assemble the people -names only to me, for the most partwho figured in other people's lives. Somewhere, I surmised, a pair of twin sisters would be stirred by the report of this day's wedding to remember that they had once stood on the fringe of the Datchley romance. Somewhere, again, a pretty, wistful young woman was being endlessly proffered as a partner to any man who had come alone to the dance-club where she worked. Somewhere an uprooted art-student was keeping the books of her father's carpet-factory. Somewhere a film-actress was explaining to her latest husband that she might have married the Datchley millions.

I roused from my musing as Bryan came back into the dining-room.

"Have you squared the press?" asked Martin.

Bryan sat down with a laugh to his inter-

rupted meal.

i' I've given them good money's worth," he answered. "I don't think I shall take seriously to crime: there's too much precious co-ordination. These fellows knew all about the row at Hilary's comic institute; they put two and two together and wanted to know if that had anything to do with my daylight robbery. I've had my work cut out for me!"

"But what did you tell them?" I asked. Bryan pondered for several moments with an expression which I did not understand. When he spoke, I realized that it was such an expression as a nabob under impeachment might have worn in amazement at his own moderation.

"I told them the truth!" he exclaimed incredulously. "They were asking me the value of what I'd lost. Was it insured? And had I offered a reward? Suddenly I saw my path clear! 'There's not been much time to offer a reward,' I said, 'but I'll do so now. Five hundred pounds! And you can give it all the publicity you like.' By Jove, I'd been wondering a moment before how to get rid of them, I wondered now what I could say to keep them. It was the scoop of the century! Buried treasure! A van-load of cases hidden somewhere within ten miles of Charing Cross! Empty van discovered on Hampstead Heath! And August Bank Holiday in four weeks!" "And if I claim the reward?" Hilary asked unexpectedly. "I've had the cases moved from the hall of the institute to my own rooms."

Bryan was caught off his guard:

"Oh, I shall have to pay, I suppose."

"And you'll get your 'few trifles', your odds and ends' back again? How much

'odds and ends', back again? How much will you pay me to say nothing?"

Bryan laughed and beckoned to Hilary,

whose pale face was unwontedly flushed.

"We can settle that later. I promise you won't be a loser if you come in with me. Ever since I got the idea of this hunt," he continued to the rest of us, "I've been seeing new possibilities. If we put our heads together, we can make a really big thing out of it. The police and the press, between them, have rather riled me to-day; and you've no particular reason for loving them, Hilary old man. If we could shew them up, make fools of them . . . You know, it would be the easiest thing in the world to do! If we collected one or two cars and started out to-night . . ."

I threw up my head; and, as I did so, I found the butler eyeing me. He coughed apologetically and looked away, but I am convinced he was reflecting that there might, after all, be something in my suggestion of Brenda's filing a petition for divorce. I turned to Bryan and noticed for the first time that he had changed into a tweed suit and was wearing a leather waistcoat.

"You should consult your wife first," I recommended.

"I shouldn't dream of going unless Brenda came too! Don't you think it might be rather fun, darling? A little adventure . . ."

For the first time since we had taken our seats, perhaps because she felt it was the last time she would have the opportunity, Mrs. Halliday roused to assert herself:

"You don't think it's sufficient adventure for any girl just to be married to you, Bryan?"

"Adventure?" he repeated with a frown.
"No, I don't! I'm afraid Brenda will find marriage a very dull affair unless we work in a little fun sometimes."

"I don't think life with you will ever be dull," said the girl.

"That's very charming . . . ," Bryan answered with a bow.

"It was meant to be completely devastating! My dear, at this rate I shall be old before my time. You're a married man, Bryan, and you must behave as such. It's farewell to adventure now . . ."

• THINGS • I REMEMBER

By ALBERT COATES

Albert Coates is regarded as one of the greatest conductors of to-day and is especially renowned for his interpretations of contemporary music. He has conducted all over the world, and his career is of particular interest as, apart from his wide and varied experience of musical life, he was born in Russia and was at the famous Marinsky Opera House, Petrograd, at the time of the Revolution.

NE of my earliest memories is of going to a Russian party given by the son of Admiral Birilow, who was at school with me. I must have been about six. We were playing Russian games when suddenly I began to feel tired and bored. I hid myself in a small room where there was a piano, upon which I began to play, improvising on some childish tune that was running in my head. I had hardly started when the door opened and a middle-aged gentleman entered.

"What are you playing, little boy?" he asked me. "I'm making it up," I said; whereupon the strange gentleman crossed the room, sat down beside me and encouraged me to continue. I did so, while he very attentively listened. The variations over, he took me on his knee and advised me to

study seriously.

"You are a very lucky boy," he continued; "when I was a child I was always longing to play, but my health was so feeble that I was not allowed to exert myself in any way." Then, putting me down, he went out from the room, bowing to my mother, who at that moment had chanced to come in. I asked her who it was. "Why," she said, "that is the great composer, Tchaikovsky."

I often think this chance meeting must have had a considerable influence on my life. The kindly encouragement of the composer made a deep impression on my childish mind and did much to arouse an enthusiasm and a delight in music which have remained throughout my life.

There was a sequel. Five years later Tchaikovsky died. Since my meeting with him he had become to my imagination something much greater than the legendary figures I read about in the history books. So I determined to be present at his funeral. To do this I had to tramp five miles through the snow to Petrograd, and there be jostled for hours by the huge crowd which had gathered for the occasion. I was very tired and hungry when at last I arrived at school, only to be soundly birched for having played truant!

Until this time I had been living in Petrograd, where I was born in 1882. My father had gone to Russia as a boy, and had finally become Director of the Thornton Woollen Mills in the Russian capital. He had married an English woman, whose mother, however, was Russian. I was the youngest of seven boys. Only two of us survive. My brother James, four years older, was a keen musician and did much to help me with my youthful studies. As a boy I played the violin, 'cello, piano and organ. My parents also did much to encourage me, and although regarding music only as a useful social accomplishment, they allowed me to go to the Conservatoire, where I studied with the famous Rimsky-Korsakov. But long before this I had been taken as a great treat to hear and see him conduct. I was much too young then to realise his genius, and I remember being most irreverently amused by his personality. Rimsky-Korsakov was very tall, very sparse, and had a long, pointed beard. But what most arrested my attention and my risibility were three pairs of spectacles, perched one above the other on his nose! To my childish imagination he seemed like an old

wizard poring over a dusty volume of magic.

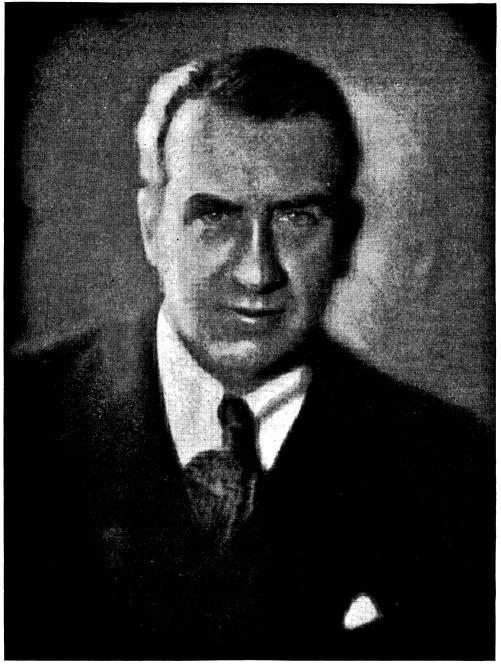


Photo by]

ALBERT COATES.

[Kurt & Richard Wesel.

Through his glasses he peered with great concentration, first at the score before him and then at the orchestra, as though he were working out some evil and potent spell.

I have often thought how curious it was that although nearly all Rimsky-Korsakov's operas and symphonic music treat of witty or burlesque subjects, he himself was utterly devoid of humour. His conversation was studiously pedantic, and he was the butt of every practical joker. He seemed tem.

peramentally incapable of seeing even the mildest of jokes.

At a musical function at which I was present he was the lion of the evening, and Chaliapine was also a guest. The singer approached Rimsky - Korsakov with great seriousness and told him that he had made a remarkable discovery. He had been singing a wellknown Russian folk-song that day and, to his amazement, had discovered that it had a ragtime rhythm. $_{\mathrm{He}}$ thereupon sang it to the composer as it should be sung, but his expres-

sive hands conducted it against the beat in syncopated time. Rimsky-Korsakov, never suspecting that his leg was being pulled, was deeply interested. For the rest of the evening he was to be observed, sitting in a remote corner, waving off would-be conversationalists, and solemnly conducting the tune for himself with his long and angular forefinger, trying with all his might to unravel this riddle of a Russian folk-song written in ragtime! He never saw the joke. But apart from this I have always had the greatest veneration for "the magician of the orchestra."

When I was fourteen I was packed off to England to complete my education. I ended up at Liverpool, where I studied under Sir Oliver Lodge, with a vague idea of becoming an electrical chemist.

When I returned home to Petrograd I was eighteen. For a time the question of my career hung in the balance. I was now quite certain that I wanted to take up music seriously, and to follow it as a career, but my father, who feared the uncertainty of

[Photopress.

ALBERT COATES CONDUCTING AT A REHEARSAL.

the artistic life, decided that I must be trained in his own business. So, for a time, I daily made my way his office. But the keeping of accounts seemed an aimless and unnecessary occupation to me. I spent most of my time writing, or rather trying to write, music. The result was that whenever m v father examined my books they were invariably behindhand, and he often remarked that he couldn't understand how I contrived to do so little in so long a time. The climax came

one day he unexpectedly entered the office and found me jotting down the notes of the second movement of a violin sonata in a ledger. After this, no doubt realising the futility of trying to make a business man of me, he decided to give me a chance of proving if I had musical ability or not.

So in 1901 I went to Leipzig, where I studied the piano, 'cello and composition, the first with that gifted pianist, Teresa Carreno. In 1904 Nikisch began a conducting class at the Conservatoire, and I was one of the first to join. Fortunately,

the conductor took a great interest in me, and I think I was his favourite pupil. Even in those days I used to conduct in a somewhat volcanic manner, and Nikisch would often observe to me, "The bâton seems insufficient for your feelings, Coates; you had better take a whip!"

It was Nikisch who persuaded me to give up my intention of becoming a solo pianist. He clinched the matter by saying, "Born conductors, Coates, are few. You are certainly one of them." Such a remark from such a conductor naturally made a opera in public. Then came one of those curious chances that read more strangely than fiction. The other two conductors fell ill simultaneously. This was on a Friday, and Nikisch had an engagement for the Sunday elsewhere which I suppose he could not cancel. On Friday morning he sent for me and explained the circumstances. The opera down for performance on the Sunday evening was Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffmann." Did I know the score? I hardly knew it at all, but realising that this was an opportunity that would not



AT THE MARINSKY OPERA HOUSE, PETROGRAD, AFTER THE PERFORMANCE OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S "SNOWFLAKE."

tremendous impression on me. Perhaps it was only his nice way of telling me that I should never obtain any success as a pianist, but might as a conductor. Anyhow, from that day I determined to become a conductor, so the responsibility of the subsequent trend of my musical life must be laid at his door.

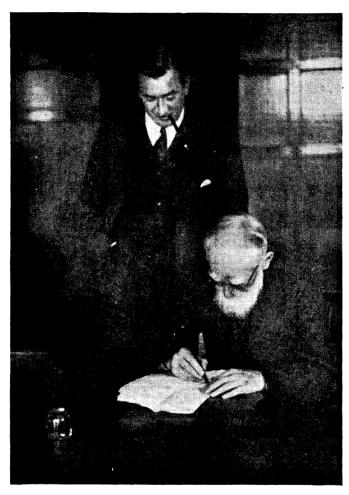
Soon after Nikisch became Director of the Leipzig Opera House and engaged me as junior conductor. But as there were two other conductors as well as Nikisch senior to me, I almost began to despair of ever having the opportunity of conducting often come my way, and with the courageous optimism and cheek of youth, I replied that I knew it backwards. "Very well," said Nikisch, "here's the score. Take it home, have another look at it. Rehearsal tomorrow at eleven."

I stayed up nearly all the night conning its pages and wishing a thousand times that I could go back to Nikisch and frame some reasonable excuse to dodge what now appeared a fearful ordeal. Fortunately at the rehearsal I became so engrossed in the music that I forgot my nervousness. Never shall I forget the thrill of pleasure and agreeable

surprise that went through me when the orchestra greeted me with a round of applause as I was about to close the score after the final bars.

The performance itself was a success. But afterwards my arms were so stiff that I could hardly move them, and my future wife had to cut up the meat for me for my supper.

House, that the Director of the Petrograd Imperial Opera heard me conduct, and offered me the post of senior conductor at his Opera House. I was just 28 and had been away from home for eleven years. Overjoyed at the prospect of once again being among my own people, I straightway accepted. Thus the famous Marinsky Opera House became the scene of my principal



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW WITNESSING A LEGAL DOCUMENT FOR ALBERT COATES.

A real source of gratification was that Nikisch was obviously pleased, for soon after he entrusted me with two new productions, one being D'Albert's "Flauto Solo." On the success of these, I was appointed conductor at the Elberfeld Opera. From there I went to Mannheim and eventually to Dresden.

It was in 1910, at the Dresden Opera

activities for many years. My Russian audiences seemed particularly to like my renderings of their own wonderful native music. I was so enthusiastic myself that possibly this lent conviction to my readings. I was very proud that I was able to make Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, "The Sacred City of Kiteesh," popular, for until then it had not received the appreciation it so

thoroughly deserves. This still remains my favourite opera.

Last year, I was able, through the B.B.C., to introduce it to English music-lovers, though shorn, alas! of its glorious stage setting. Incidentally, one of my most treasured possessions is a painting of one of the scenes by Lapshine, the Russian painter, who designed the stage set and the costumes for my Petrograd performance.

One of my many curious experiences in Russia was when a "Kiteesh" performance was attended by an audience solely comcould not have been better done had it been carefully rehearsed.

In 1914 I conducted for the first time at Covent Garden, the occasion being the Wagner season, which included the first performance in England of "Parsifal." This was in January and February, and subsequently my contract was extended to the Grand Season in May, June and July. On my return to Russia, I was appointed artistic director of the Imperial Opera in addition to my post as conductor.

In 1917 the Russian Revolution broke out.



ALBERT COATES AND CHALIAPINE, THE RUSSIAN BASS, AFTER A RECORDING SESSION AT HAYES.

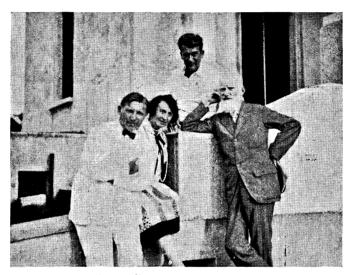
posed of soldiers, who had never before witnessed an opera. They had been carefully drilled beforehand as to their behaviour, and told that they could express approval—that is, if they liked the performance—by hand-clapping. Apparently they did approve, for at the end there was much applause. The artists and I, in response to this, appeared on the stage and made the customary bow. The audience rose as one man and bowed back! Apart from the funny side of the incident, I was deeply affected by the charming naïveté of it. It

The Tsar's Operatic Director immediately resigned his position. For a time no one knew what was going to happen. Then the artists of the Petrograd Theatre met and formed a managing committee, choosing the members from among themselves by vote and electing me as President. The Revolutionary Government acknowledged our committee, who managed so well that when the Bolsheviks came into power they confirmed this autonomy and left us to act for ourselves. The arrangement proved in fact to be a very happy one, the

artists working very amicably together, without intrigues or jealousies. But some time later I became seriously ill, bloodpoisoning set in, and for two months I believe there was a fear that I should not live. This thought never entered my mind. At length the Government granted me two months' leave of absence to go to a sanatorium in Finland to recuperate. When I left Russia in 1919 I had directed opera in Petrograd for eight years.

Via Finland, and fortunately by this time fully recovered, I arrived in England in May, and met Sir Thomas Beecham, who engaged me as senior conductor and coartistic director with himself for a season conducting the concerts of the New York Symphony Orchestra. At the first concert at the Carnegie Hall I started with the Elgar "Enigma Variations." In one of the variations the tympanist has a gloriously energetic time, and this particular performer hit his drum such a resounding crash that his stick went through the parchment! There was nothing for it but to stop the concert until a new drum had been obtained. The New York Times stated that at my last concert 3,000 people were turned away. For the following five years I toured for three months in America annually.

For three years in succession I have been to Italy, where I have conducted the



ALBERT COATES, "G.B.S.," GALAVANOW, THE CONDUCTOR OF THE MOSCOW STATE OPERA HOUSE, AND NEJDANOWA, THE COLORATURA SINGER, AT MR. COATES'S ITALIAN VILLA ON LAKE MAGGIORE.

of opera at Covent Garden. An amusing incident occurred in this season after the conclusion of the ballet in "Prince Igor." There was a great deal of enthusiasm, and I got hustled on to the stage to take a call. I did not notice that all the men had disappeared, and I suddenly found myself centre stage and in front of the audience in the midst of some fifty scantily attired girls. A stentorian voice from the gallery cut like a knife through the clapping, ejaculating, "Put me amongst the girls."

During this year I was also appointed conductor to the London Symphony Orchestra and conducted also many concerts of the Royal Philharmonic Society.

In 1921 I made my first visit to New York,

Augusteo concerts in Rome and also at La Scala, Milan, opera at the Teatro Verdi at Trieste and the San Carlo at Naples. I have also conducted at the Grand Opera in Paris and in Rotterdam, Vienna, Stockholm and many other Continental towns.

Italy has always made a great appeal to me, and for many years now I have had a villa on Laga Maggiore where I go every spring to work on the scores of my operas and other compositions. All would be well if it were not for the influx of visitors who determine that I shall do anything but work. I am not sure that I do not welcome them and am glad that they give me an excuse to laze in the sunshine or sail on the lake. But G.B.S. is one of my yearly

visitors, and he by no means holds with laziness. Indeed, it is difficult to justify complete idleness when he is about, so usually I compromise with myself and my friends and manage to get through a fair amount of work.

For the last five years I have also annually gone to Spain to conduct at Barcelona a two-months' season of opera. They do things on a lavish and fine scale there. Last season Chaliapine sang in "Boris Godounov."

Since I left Petrograd in 1919 I have repeatedly been asked to return to my beloved Marinsky Theatre, but it was not until 1926 that my engagements permitted me to do so. I then went for three months, a visit that I have again been able to repeat, not only last year, but this year as well.

A conductor's life is great fun although it involves more hard work and preparation than most people imagine. And singers are not always easy folk to work with, their highly strung temperaments being sometimes difficult to cope with. Orchestral players are usually fine fellows. In particular, it is a very real pleasure to work with English orchestras. They are magnificent readers and players, and they have a way of making things go very easily. Also many of them have a quickness of wit, which they aptly express in some humorous

remark when rehearsals are dragging or going wrong, and this does much to cheer a dull morning.

Once I was at Hayes making some gramophone records for "His Master's Voice" Company. We had been recording, among other things, Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel" (it should be remembered that the first syllable of the latter word is pronounced oil"). A side of this was played back to me for approval and I noticed a strange shrill noise which I could not account for at The recorder asked me if it were not possible to do something to eliminate what he called "the queer squeak." Mr. W. H. Reed, who was leading the violins, promptly answered, "You mean as we are doing 'Till Eulenspiegel' you want the accent on the oil." So we played it through again, with a different grouping of the orchestra and with the accent on the oil! This time the record played back perfectly. I must say that the introduction of the microphone to the studio has not only made recording (always a trying and nervy experience) much easier, but has also imparted a naturalism and realism to the record itself which is nothing short of marvellous.

Besides music, my great hobby is motoring. My friends say that I am fond of exceeding the speed limit. I am. But they often unkindly add that it is much the same with my conducting!

OTHER LOVERS.

I KNOW there must be other lovers too,
Wrapped in forgetfulness of time and place,
Locked in the perilous joy of love's embrace,
And yet—how can they love, who know not you?

But in their dreams they feel the pain and bliss And see about their heads the flaming wing. Ah, yes, I know that other lovers cling As we do now, exchanging kiss for kiss.

O my beloved, how can they be glad,
Poor cheated lovers, who are unaware
Of all the deeps of loving that we share,
Who cannot even guess the heaven we've had?
M. K. M. B.



NOT TO BE HAD.

BALLOONIST (in fog): Hello, down there, where am I? YOKEL: Ye can't fool Oi, young feller, you're up in that old basket!



THE "GARDEN OF SNAKES" AT BUTANTAN, NEAR SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL.

THE GARDEN OF SNAKES • •

By IGNATIUS PHAYRE

MAGINE a country as large as Europe from the Liffey to the Bosphorus, yet still having enormous areas of quite unexplored territory. Such is Brazil, whose revenue is mainly derived from her coffee crops, and whose capital, Rio de Janeiro, is acknowledged by all to be the loveliest city in the world. Yet most of Amazonas Province (730,000 square miles in itself) remains to this day virgin jungle as it was before Columbus was born. Brazil is indeed a land of surprises and of amazing contrasts.

In this colossal Eden the serpent—both venomous and non-venomous—is for numbers like the sands of the sea; and tens of thousands of people die dreadful deaths every year from snake-bite, or at least suffer mental and bodily anguish of a kind undreamt of in more settled and civilised lands. This brings me to the Institute of Serumtherapy at Butantan, near São Paulo, surely the most fascinating "Garden of Snakes" and scientific snake-fighting research station in all the world.

Here the laboratories and museum, with stables for the envenomed horses, mules and oxen which yield the precious anti-toxin of their own blood, look down upon the sinister "park" of serpents, with its symmetrical array of cemented dens and a wide moat in which toads and evil reptiles glide through stagnant waters. Beyond the suburb of Butantan stretch ragged woods and plains, with the great and prosperous coffee-city of São Paulo beyond.

The Institute, directed by the famous ophidologist, Dr. Vital Brazil, is the continent-nation's clearing-house for poisonous snakes. The "fazendeiros," or growers of coffee, sugar, cocoa and other produce, capture and consign snakes in the special labelled cases which the Institute provides and which all Brazil's railways and river companies carry free of charge.

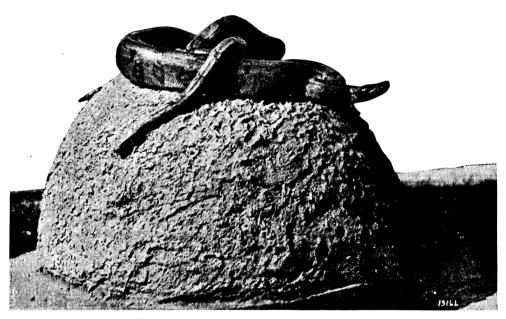
In their thousands these reptiles come, and are loosed in the garden until the scientific staff are ready to extract their venom. And in due time the agricultural senders receive

vials of the precious serum, together with syringe-needles, for instant injection to any victim of snake-bite in their service. A coffee-fazenda, miles in extent, may be many days, if not weeks, from the railway or any considerable town. And the field hands who care for the rich exotic shrubs, or pick the ripe coffee-berries, are almost always barefooted.

So easy is it, therefore, to get bitten by the lurking jararacá, or the dread lachesis, or cascavel. In twelve hours of everincreasing agony the victim will die a truly terrifying death, unless his master has at hand the needle and the still more vital

literature to match. When an accident occurs, it is important to identify the snake. Females are bigger than males; size ranges from the constrictor of thirty feet to the tiny "coral" of lovely hue and markings—and a bite that can kill in two hours!

How much poison has the reptile shot through its fang-glands into the victim's blood? That depends on the size of the snake, on its state of health, and above all on the period which has passed since its last "strike." For the venom is secreted very slowly; it will not reach the maximum deposit until from 15 to 30 days after the reptile's last meal.



ONE OF THE MUD "HIVES," IN WHICH THE SNAKES LIVE, WITH TWO OF ITS INHABITANTS BASKING IN THE SUN.

portion of horse-blood, which begins at once its miraculous fight with the coursing venom that is paralysing every nerve and muscle, and stops the heart itself at last after symptoms which are appalling to watch. Hence the need for this State "Institute of Snakes," which is a fascinating model of organisation to the whole tropical world.

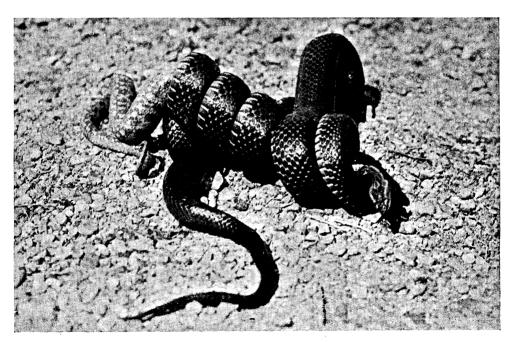
The Director tells me of five thousand deaths and twenty thousand lesser cases every year. This is but a drop in the ocean of human woe in a vast land where ignorance is dense as the Amazonian *matto* itself. Snake-catching sticks, with safety leathers, are sent out to the farms and orchards, with

That quick-darting tongue is the organ of touch and direction. And the female will deposit 20 to 40 eggs, hatching them out in hot humid places with body-coils that rise mysteriously in temperature for this purpose. At the Institute snakes are constantly under observation; climbing-snakes, water-snakes, monsters and babies of all sizes. All are carnivorous; some will go an entire year without eating anything at all!

The scientists here do not believe that serpents "fascinate" their prey. This was demonstrated for me by their pushing a live rabbit into a cage with a deadly lachesis-snake. Far from showing fear, the rabbit frisked about gaily—to hop at last upon



A SINISTER "CLOSE-UP" OF THE "GARDEN OF SNAKES."



A REMARKABLE PICTURE SHOWING ONE OF THE MOST POISONOUS OF SNAKES BEING CRUSHED TO DEATH BY A LARGER AND STRONGER SPECIMEN OF A NON-POISONOUS VARIETY.



EXTRACTING VENOM FROM A DEADLY SNAKE.

those spotted coils in the corner and begin his dainty toilet. Serious accidents are not unknown, even here in the Institute itself. Once a porter was unloading snakes in cases when one case was dropped and broken open. The man vanished, and three hours later his rigid corpse was found in the garden.

As a guest of the Federal and State Governments of Brazil, I was fortunate in visiting the laboratories with Senhor Pires do Rio, the able and cultured Prefect of

São Paulo itself. I saw venom taken from a large jararacá. An assistant in white overalls and jackboots went out into the most awful of all "parks" armed only with a sort of crook. He pounced on a scurrying reptile, and, stooping to the leather that held the wriggling creature, picked it up by the neck with his thumb and forefinger.

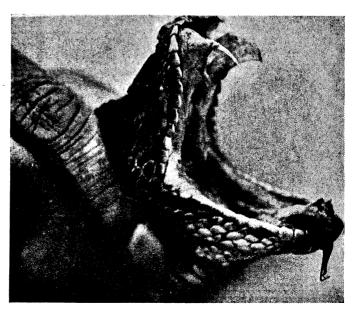
A scientist was waiting with us, holding a shallow glass dish. He propped open the great jaws and began to tease the snake, which suddenly struck at the glass, depositing in it a tiny mass of viscous jelly, bright yellow in hue. It is this which is dried on a stove and injected into the horses in ever-

increasing doses, until their blood becomes the anti-toxin that means salvation to many a stricken man, woman or child.

On one occasion Senhor Bruno Pestana, a member of the staff, had an accident that might have cost him his life. The assistant holding a 4-foot snake stumbled. In a flash the reptile buried his fengs in Senhor Pestana's thumb. Burning pain soon spread up the arm. His muscles shivered, his sight grew dim; the usual constriction of the throat set in, with sudden chills. Fear that amounts to anguish is another symptom of snake-bite. So is drowsiness and bleeding at ears, nose, and even through the surface of the skin. Dr. Pestana kept cool enough,

though well aware of his peril. He injected 40 c.c. of serum; and in an hour the dread signs of poison were abating.

Unluckily, this marvellous preparation of science is not widely known in so vast and illiterate a land. So the rural quack does a queer and profitable trade. He uses strange herbs and roots, washed down with a hell-broth made from the bile and liver of snakes ("Like cures like"!). He has also magic stones and horns; or he applies to the two fang-wounds poultices of living



A RATTLESNAKE, GRASPED BY A HUMAN HAND, ABOUT TO DISCHARGE POISON INTO A GLASS,

animals, cut open for this savage surgery. One of these medicos actually advised a leper patient to let himself be bitten by a cascavel-snake, whose venom kills quicker than any other. The victim agreed. What followed must be without a parallel in medical annals, or even in the most extravagant drama of the cinema.

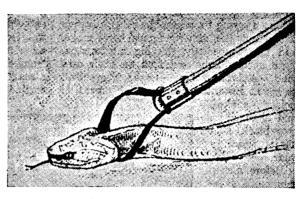
Mariano José Machado had suffered from leprosy for six years, and grew utterly reckless at last. Qualified doctors warned him that he was courting death. Yet Mariano insisted. A caged cascavel was produced before a synod of scientists; the leper was made to

sign a "free-will" declaration of his weird suicide. Then he thrust in his hand. The snake evaded him—although followed by fingers that pursued him all over the cage. Those fingers pinched the creature at last, and were instantly bitten—at 11.30 a.m. by the watches of the onlookers in this singular tragedy.

The hand showed the usual rosy punctures, without any blood—unlike the bite of non-venomous snakes. In twenty minutes the member swelled, and pain spread fast. Within two hours Machado had cold feet, a pulse of 104, a "tight' throat, with heavy sweats, drowsiness and nose-bleeding. Soon his agony was frightful to witness; his whole body reddening, with the pulse at 108 and



POSITION ASSUMED BY RATTLESNAKE WHEN ABOUT TO EXPEL ITS POISON.



DRAWING SHOWING THE MANNER IN WHICH POISONOUS SNAKES ARE HANDLED.

swallowing impossible. At 11.30 next morning the man died in convulsions, while the doctors were making copious notes for the medical press of New York, Paris and London! The thing may seem incredible in its frigid horror. But there it is in the annals of the Instituto de Butantan.

In some species of snakes the venom is colourless or milky. No animal that lives—not even the poison-snake itself—is quite immune from the toxic effects. Birds are the most sensitive; fishes are very resistant, as also are the pig and the porcupine. To kill a cascavel (the South American "rattler") calls for enough venom to despatch:

10 other snakes
25 cows
60 horses
600 rabbits
and
300,000 pigeons!

Research chemists find in this slowlysecreted venom certain alkaloids which coagulate the blood. Certain it is that all over the Tropics death in its most ghastly form lies in lurk for the barefooted human being. Out of a hundred cases reported to Šão Paulo's "Garden of Snakes," 60 were in the feet, 13 in the leg, 22 in the hand; the rest in abdomen or chest-even one or two in the mouth itself. Head money has been offered for these swarming reptiles by both the Federal and State Governments of Brazil. But this plan is hopeless before the prolificness of the snake -and the fraud of indolent native claimants, who will themselves actually breed the creatures for such profit!

Snake will eat snake, but nothing seems to diminish his numbers. All the elaps are

"ophiophagous." For years the Institute has been trying to induce the coffee-planters to protect the non-venomous coral-snake, and more especially the big mussumana. Both species hunt and feed on their own kind. A four-foot mussumana was shown to me at Butantan which had devoured 25

poison - snakes, and changed its grey-black skin three times a year.

Before me, a venomous jararacá was thrown into this hunting serpent's cage. The reptiles were of equal size. The hunter attacked, was savagely bitten, and then turned and seized its poisonbrother about a foot from the flat triangular head. Slowly with and method, the mussumana worked his great jaws along the desperately squirming coils of his prey. At last he crushed the defiant head. and then began seemingly the impossible task of swallowing a creature as big as himself!

Most curious, as well as horrible, was it to watch the jararacá vanishing

inch by inch into the live tube of his slayer.

At last even the tail disappeared, and the black snake settled down to the peaceful process of digesting his venomous brother!

The model stables of this strangest of all laboratories are at once sad and inspiring to visit. There is elaborate gear for holding a restive horse during the injection of snakevenom, commencing with $\frac{1}{10}$ ths of a milli-

gramme. All the animals, even bullocks and sheep, according to the poison used, are well-fed and beautifully groomed. Here is a fine upstanding roan mare of fifteen hands, trembling as though with an ague. She had a maximum dose this morning, we are told, and now is literally a potential fountain of

life to hundreds of snake-bitten victims.

How can one tell, if the snake is not killed or vanishes. whether the bite received is dangerous? By the wounds. If they are four in number, superficial and bleeding freely, all is well; the bite was inflicted by a non-venomous serpent. But two pink pinhead marks, showing blood \mathbf{at} indicate the gravest case; for even if the reptile has not injected its maximum dose the victim will suffer seriously -to say nothing of aftereffects that may cripple his vitality for the rest of his days.

The Institute deals also with the poison of scorpions, tarantulas and birdeating spiders.

These last are quite formidable—great velvet-backed monsters, eight inches or more across, whose bite will produce ulcers, and even death itself. So goes the unique work of the Institute of Serumtherapy at São Paulo, distilling life and hope out of the most deadly of snake-poisons, and spreading its light throughout the enormous spaces of "Darkest Brazil."



GATHERING SNAKE POISON.

Grasping a rattlesnake by the back of the neck and forcing it to bite at the cheese-cloth stretched over the top of the tumbler, causing the poison thus expelled to drip into the glass.

MR. GOODGE • STREET •

By ANDRUE BERDING

■ ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING ■

YES, that was his name, Mr. Goodge Street. His mother, you may be sure, never gave it to him. I and the clerks in the office of the clothing house of Henderson & Sons, overlooking the Victoria Embankment, we gave it to him.

Why?

Goodge Street, among other things, is an Underground station between Tottenham Court Road and Warren Street. Have you ever travelled that way? If you have, you have often heard the guards call out, "Pass Goodge Street." They mean that the train will not stop at Goodge Street but pass on

to more important stations.

That was Mr. Goodge Street for you. The office records bore his name as George Emerson Tait, but very few of us knew it as such. To us the 36-years-old man who had never come to the office one minute late, who bent uncomplainingly over his desk the eight hours of his working day, who never took more than the allotted forty-five minutes for his luncheon, was Mr. Goodge Street. We scarcely knew his other name.

Just as Goodge Street is passed, so the slightly greying Mr. Goodge Street was passed. For eighteen years exactly Mr. Goodge Street had sat at the same high desk, covering countless thousands of sheets of paper with figures. The amount of money he had handled in that time—on paper—would have made a Rockefeller envious. And yet Mr. Goodge Street had very little of it. His salary had risen a total of one pound a week in eighteen years—and Mr. Goodge Street was satisfied. A dozen of the cocksure youths who had started years after him had passed him to higher positions and more luscious salaries—and Mr. Goodge Street was satisfied.

Once ruddy of face, but now with the sallow look of one who has bent too many years over his books, Mr. Goodge Streetor Goodge, as some of the younger men in the office called him for short—became the symbol of all that was permanent and static. He was the living image of Gibraltar the Immovable. If Mr. Goodge had arrived at the office five minutes late at least three or four of us would have realised that the Second Advent was about to become an established fact. If he had dared to light a cigarette during the course of his work, particularly while Mr. Amery Henderson, the office manager, was looking at him, all the world might have guessed it.

In a way he reminded you of Gibraltar, personally. His face had a rock-bound look. His nose was sharply moulded, his chin square and somewhat hard. If you had seen him divorced from his desk you would not have called him a clerk. But, married to his desk, you would have called

him one always and everlastingly.

Yet there were times—particularly in the spring—when I caught Mr. Goodge Street looking up and out of the window over the prosperous bustle of the river. And at those times there was a far-away glow in his eyes like the gleam of a roaring fire hidden in the forest. And, when the stolid, immobile look had left his face, he was really startlingly handsome, and had the air of life about him.

Mr. Goodge Street was the office jest, and the background if not the butt for many a joke. When Mr. Amery Henderson celebrated his thirtieth birthday it was Mr. Goodge Street who was called upon to present to him the elaborately wrapped Woolworth toy motor-car, while Edward Houston, the wide-awake shipping clerk,

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presented the beautiful oak desk set.

It was upon Goodge that the Henderson

It was upon Goodge that the Henderson Company's magazine fastened the joke about the City person who goes to the country and is given a stool and told to go milk the cow. Returning very dishevelled, he reports utter failure, saying: "I couldn't for the life of me get the cow to sit down on that stool."

The girls—and they were a pretty lot at Henderson's, as I can testify, for I married one of them—were particularly fond of making sport of Goodge. If they spoke of their ideal of a prospective husband, he was always to be compared in inverse ratio with Mr. Goodge Street. The man they would marry would really be a man by having missed from his character all that was attributed to Goodge. Some few of the girls—or rather, let us say, one or two—felt sorry for him, but their sympathy met with no answering echo from the others.

Mary Evans, the red-haired typist, was emphatically indignant when she told the girls in the dressing-room one evening:

"I don't think it's right for a man to have no ambition. There isn't any inspiration for the rest of us. Just to look at him day after day takes all the pep out of me."

Edythe Bakewell was hard on her heels

in agreement.

"He positively gives me the creeps," she exclaimed. "When you see him bending over his desk all the time like that and writing numbers just as if the rest of the world didn't exist, he makes you think he's one of those Ruberts or Roberts, those mechanical people in 'Metropolis,' you know."

Dorothea Baker and Constance Tooley condemned him as a "back number" and

a "yesterday's newspaper."

But of all the girls it was Charing Trudell who was most biting. Her sarcasm was cruel beyond limits. She went out of her way to torture old Goodge. She called him a "human interrogation mark, with his head bent down over the desk and his back arched in a curve. You feel like sticking him with a pin and changing him into an exclamation mark."

Charing was as much the opposite of Mr. Goodge Street as the heart of London is of the heart of Uganda. The office force called her Charing Cross, and I can tell you she deserved it. All the trains stopped at her station, as it were. And they came through at the rate of one a minute.

Charing was probably the prettiest girl

in the office, though I think my wife, Mildred, could have contested that honour with her had she remained at work. She had a pert yet winsome head which, when it bent over her desk, made you instinctively wish she'd raise it so that you could see her face. She had dark eyes which made it difficult indeed for you to keep your mind on facts and figures when you wanted to tell her something about office routine. Her lips were better fitted for other things than calling across to Tony Davenport the latest quotations on Alabama cotton.

Charing called him Mr. Goodge Street, or Goodge, to his face. She didn't care for anything or anyone, that girl. And he took it, took it standing, took it sitting. All he did was to look a bit bewildered.

Goodge didn't look upon Charing as the other chaps did. All the men in the office were head over heels in love with her. She could have had all her work done willingly for her by the male members of the staff. She could have had a date every night in the week and every Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday if she had wanted. Gossip was rife that even young Mr. Henderson was getting ready to lay his offerings of adoration at her feet. But to Mr. Goodge Street she was apparently part of the office furniture.

II.

AFTER what I've told you I don't suppose you can imagine why Charing invited Mr. Goodge Street to be her partner at her married sister's masquerade dance. It was just dare, of course, foolish, unthinking bravado. Charing was always willing to do the unusual. She took little thought of the fact that her jest might turn out to be a cruel one to Mr. Goodge Street.

The news was like a bomb explosion. It took the whole of the morning to digest it. Work that morning was but poorly done. Even I, a staid married man, wrote to Hunter & Company that our quotation on blue-ribbed cloth was thirty shillings a yard instead of half a crown.

Did Mr. Goodge Street accept? He started to say something, but Charing cut in: "Then it's all settled. Call for me at 7.45." Charing did not even know whether he could dance.

For the rest of the day Goodge's face was dazed, the few times he raised it from his ledger.

III.

Mr. Goodge Street could not dance, and there was no disguising the fact. But he did for once in his life—or at least in the last eighteen years—look respectable. He was dressed in the uniform of a first officer of a freight steamer. It was a well-fitting uniform and it became him. It made him seem younger, and it took the look of pens and paper and ink from his face.

Charing's sister's party was just large enough—twenty couples—to permit Mr.

steps and succeeded. As Charing felt herself in his arms she sensed that his years as an interrogation mark had not undermined his strength. When the dance was over they sat in the dining-room, which Charing's sister used as a sitting-out room.

Mr. Goodge Street waited for her to speak first. He was afraid of her, though he would have died for her. If he had never shown it as the young calves at the office had done, he had not been less immune than they to Charing's charms.



Goodge Street to sink into his usual insignificance, but far too small to submerge Charing. In a daring blaze of blue silk she became the lodestone of all light dancing feet. Her programme was mortgaged three or four times over. But, having cast her stone, she remained to watch the ripples. To Goodge she awarded four dances, twice as many as to the most favoured youth there.

Their first dance was not altogether a success, but they survived it. Goodge had said he just couldn't dance. Charing had said he just had to. They tried simple

"I like your costume, Mr.—Mr. Tait," Charing complimented. "Did you have to rent it?"

"No. This is my own, but it's eighteen years old."

"My word!" she exclaimed. She felt his sleeve and he thrilled at her touch. "You've preserved it marvellously well. What uniform is it?"

"A first officer on a freight steamer. I was one once. I was the youngest first officer on the Indian Mail Line." Just a trace of pride crept into his ordinarily uninspired voice. And then his voice fell.

"I've kept the uniform so well because I've never worn it since."

"Why not?" Charing demanded. "What

made you give it up?"

"My mother was ill, and she couldn't stand my being away so long at times. So I got a job ashore at Henderson's."

"Oh!" exclaimed Charing indignantly.

That was selfish of your mother. Didn't she have anyone else to look after her?"

Mr. Goodge Street rose to the defence of his mother as if all the powers on earth had declared war against her. "She had no one else," he said. "My only brother is in America. My father was killed when I was young. He was a first officer too, and I just stepped into his shoes, as it were. Mother's dead now, too."

"I'm sorry," Charing said, "I've hurt

you.''

"Don't be sorry. I know you wouldn't

willingly hurt anyone."

She looked at him uncertainly, knowing the hundreds of times she had hurt him.

"Haven't you ever wanted to go back

to the sea? ", she asked.

"Yes. Quite often. But more often I feel I'd like to manage one of the big docks. There's something thrilling in it. You see those giant boats come in from the ends of the earth, bulging with freight, and you strip them of their booty and send it broadcast all over the kingdom."

Charing's eyes opened wide. Mr. Goodge Street was becoming positively poetic.

"Why don't you do the work you want to?" she asked.

But the music came and prevented the

reply.

When they danced again, Goodge tried the same simple steps he had used before—this time with greater certainty and understanding of the rhythm, which drew a compliment from Charing. His dancing continued to improve as the evening wore

"I used to dance a lot when I was a first officer," he explained. "In all sorts of ports. In Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Vera Cruz, Norfolk, Manila—well, everywhere. But this is the first time in eighteen years."

"You ought to dance more."

"No, I don't think so; that is, unless-"

"Unless what?"
"I don't know."

She turned away, disappointed.

IV.

When the last dance had ebbed to its end, Mr. Goodge Street commandeered a taxi-cab to take her home.

Charing let herself sit in the centre of the cab, just next to him.

"What do you do in your spare time,

Mr. Tait?" she asked.

"I often go down to the docks and talk to the officers and engineers," he replied. "They nearly all knew Dad, and some of them knew me—in those old days. Sometimes I go down to the sea on Sunday. Two years ago I did a lot of work on a new derrick I invented."

"What!" exclaimed Charing. "You

invented a derrick?"

"Yes, after a fashion," he said deprecatingly. "It's far from being even good. But it works smoothly and it's efficient. It's a cantilever derrick. Perhaps in fifty years I might make some money out of it."

Charing looked at him almost uncom-

prehendingly.

"You've never mentioned this at the office."

"Oh, no! Please don't! I told it to you in confidence. They wouldn't understand at the office."

"No," mused Charing. "They haven't understood." And then she asked: "Where

do you do all this work?"

"In my rooms. I have a regular work-room fitted up there. When I have nothing else to do I make model ships. Some are very pretty." He looked out of the cab window. "Here's Edgware Road. We're almost passing it now." There was a pause. "It's the second house on the right, the first floor looking this way."

"Oh, I'd like to see it," Charing said.
"I'd like to show it to you some time."

"Why not now?"

"Oh, no, Charing—I mean Miss Trudell—

it's night, you know."

"That doesn't matter. I'll be safe enough with you. And call me Charing if you want."

Still he hesitated.

Charing rapped on the glass partition of the cab. "Tell the driver to stop," she cried. "He's going beyond your flat."

Mr. Goodge Street opened the door and

called to the driver.

V.

THEY were back again in fifteen minutes.

"I think your work is beautiful," Charing congratulated.

"Thank you," said Goodge a little breathlessly.

"There's nothing I like better than a

picturesque ship model."

"Would you accept one if I made it for

"Of course I would," she laughed. "But I'm afraid I cast out too broad a hint, so I withdraw it. You're under no obligations."

"It would be a gentle obligation," he said.

She looked at him without speaking.

He thanked her as he left her at the door of her home.

"It's I who ought to thank you," she said. "I have had the best time I've ever had in my life."

VI.

Next morning in the dressing-room Charing was the centre of a chattering group of girls, each wanting to know from her own point of view what had happened. But Charing was strangely uninformative.

"He disappointed me," she said. That summed it all up. She had expected fun from Mr. Goodge, and he had not been

"Well, what can you expect from an antique like that?" demanded Mary Evans.

"Bored you stiff, I expect," commented Edythe Bakewell.

"No, not at all," returned Charing, and went into the office.

Mr. Goodge Street sat at his desk just as he had sat for 5,400 days in the last eighteen years. His back was arched again to form an interrogation mark. Charing was five minutes late, but Goodge had been exactly on time.

Stifling what might have been a sigh, Charing passed to her desk without speaking, and apparently without his seeing her. But towards one o'clock she had occasion -or took it-to place some papers on his desk.

"Will you take me to lunch to-day?" she asked.

He looked up, was startled for a moment, glanced down, then said, "Of course."

They went to a restaurant near by. As they walked along the Embankment the March winds blew in from the Thames where the tug-boats were moaning their message of hurry under Blackfriars Bridge and the barges were splashing their ponderous way through the dark-brown water.

Charing saw Mr. Goodge Street straighten

up and throw back his shoulders.

"Spring is the time to go to sea," he "Every year at this time I feel the urge. Green grass grows on the sea in spring, just as it does on land, only you feel it in the air rather than see it."

"I'd like to go to sea with you," Charing said, and she really meant it. "I'm sure you could tell me what the sea does and what it means better than anyone else."

It was the only time anyone had credited Mr. Goodge Street with special wisdom, and

he was exalted.

They said scarcely anything more until they were seated at table. Then she asked:

"Doesn't it seem awfully strange for me to ask you to take me to lunch?"

"No," he said simply. "It seems very natural." And he added: "I'm very glad to do it."

"I enjoyed talking to you so much last night," she went on.

"May I tell you something?" he asked impulsively.

"Why, yes, of course."

"I didn't sleep at all last night. Not a moment. I couldn't. I was too wrought up thinking about the dance. At four o'clock this morning I got up and dressed and went out for a walk. I walked all the way to Hyde Park and back. Even then I couldn't sleep."

"It wouldn't do for you to go to a dance every night, would it?" she asked slylv.

"It would all depend on the dance, I

suppose," he replied.

He gave their order to the waitress, and Charing noticed there was not the apologetic uncertainty in his voice that the office knew.

"Mr. Tait," she asked, "why do you stay on at Henderson's? I should think you could get a job easily enough elsewhere, where-where-

Something of hurt crept into his eyes, but he asked her to continue.

"Where you'd be appreciated," finished.

"Do you really think so?"—his voice was again uncertain. "I've grown so used to the work at Henderson's. I know it better than anyone there probably. And I could always keep my job as long as my health holds out. I don't know anything else to do."

"I'm certain you could find better and more responsible work. Why don't you try?"

He did not know.

"I think I'd like you much better if you did."

He caught her look full, and something in it startled him. He did not say anything for several long moments.

"I'm going on my holidays to-morrow." He changed the conversation.

"Where are you going?"

"I think I'll stay in town mostly, going to the docks. But I'll go to the seaside for a day perhaps."

"Will that be the extent of your going

them with a barrage of wit at Goodge's expense. But her refusal to talk about him led them to delight themselves with jests which imagined Goodge in all kinds of ludicrous social predicaments.

During the second week of Goodge's absence Charing had a birthday—I won't tell you which one. Among her presents was one of the most beautiful model galleons I have ever seen.

VII.

I was sitting at my desk overlooking the



For two weeks Mr. Goodge Street was away. Probably no one in the office missed him except myself. I had come to rely on his accuracy and perfect efficiency for so long that during the first day or so I was actually in difficulties and had to ask two of the clerks to remain overtime.

If Charing missed him she never said anything about it to anyone. The girls still laughed about the dance, but the banter had taken a strange turn. They had expected that Charing would delight Embankment two weeks later, at ten minutes past nine. The rest of the office force reported for work

and were busily engaged pretending to do it. Mr. Goodge Street had not appeared. I had already placed a mountain of papers on his desk and was waiting to give him a thousand instructions, glad to get so much of the work off my shoulders.

At a quarter past nine the door opened. Enter Mr. Goodge Street. . . .

I think half the office staff had been waiting for that moment. What a moment it was!

Mr. Goodge Street was dressed in a brown suit that might have been made in Savile Row. He wore a light brown shirt, with a modish brown silk tie. His shoes looked as if they might have cost half a week's salary. He carried a light tan overcoat, and hung a tan felt hat on the hook. Goodge might have been a photo from "Man and His Clothes."

He bore himself with an assurance that would have befitted young Mr. Henderson. He held himself erect, and there was no trace of the interrogation mark in his shoulders.

And he was fifteen minutes late!

Practically the whole office force had raised their heads to watch Mr. Goodge take his seat. Probably no one watched him more intently than Charing, whose desk faced the door.

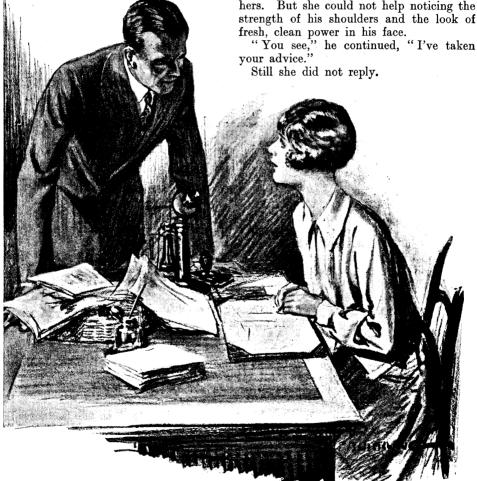
"If he had gone to his desk," she told me afterwards, "and bent over and started writing those foolish figures, I think I should have burst out crying."

But he didn't.

He walked right up to her desk, without a look at his own.

"I'm resigning to-day," he said. "I'm now assistant superintendent of the Regina Docks."

She did not know what to say, especially as all eyes in the office were trying to read hers. But she could not help noticing the strength of his shoulders and the look of



"She did not know what to say, especially as all eyes in the office were trying to read hers. But she could not help noticing the strength of his shoulders and the look of fresh, clean power in his face.'

"I want to ask you something, Charing, before I go," he went on hurriedly.
"Yes?" she said uncertainly.

"I want to ask you to go away with me

He paused, and Charing looked up. "As Mrs. Goodge Street," he ended.

She cast down her eyes again.

"It's not Mr. Goodge Street any more," she said in a low voice. "You've moved on to Leicester Square."

"You haven't answered my question, Charing," he insisted. "Will you?"

There was just enough of gentle command in his voice to make her lift her eyes to meet his full and whisper " Yes."

And that is how the Henderson office lost the most faithful of its clerks and the prettiest of its girls in all its historyalways excepting, of course, Mildred, my

GOLF

Golf is a game, a god, and a gamble; a Circe, a siren; its victims in thrall.

It is a science, an art; at best an inspiration.

It has been called other, less complimentary, things; some of them unfit for publication.

Somebody once said it was a nice walk spoiled. He was no golfer.

Another, obviously an unsuccessful tyro, called it an unprovoked assault upon an inoffensive ball with implements ill-adapted for the purpose.

A simple-minded, inexperienced soul said it was a frantic and usually unsuccessful

attempt to lose a ball.

It is hard to start the golfing habit, impossible to break it.

Battles have been won on the playing-fields of schools. War will be ended on the golflinks of the world.

No real golfer would ever be able to find the time to start any other war.

The beginner is at war with Colonel Bogey.

Young men call golf an old man's game.

The, self-styled, middle-aged wish they had started earlier.

With a million devotees, the game has almost as many detractors.

It vies with Baby Austin cars and fishing as a butt for would-be humorists.

It bears the stamp of greatness in that it has a whole library of humour of its own.

Jokes about language, plus-fours, and the nineteenth hole.

Golf jokes break, with miraculous simultaneity, on every course at the same time.

Non-golfers, invited to lunch at the club-house, tell them to their hosts six months later. All golfers are full of the desire to make the sceptic believe, not in the excellence of the game, but in the veracity of their statements.

All golf stories are true. Most of them happened in the teller's own club.

This one happened to ten different men, in ten different parts of the world, at the same time. They all swear to it, often.

Each of them took out a man who had never held a club before.

(It is that old one, so golfers may as well jump the next seven paragraphs.)

He came to watch, but, at the short 14th, said he'd like to have a shot.

His grip was hopeless, his stance all wrong; but he hit the ball hard and true.

The ball flew high and far.

It bounded on the fairway. (For "fairway" read "pretty" in two instances.)

Bounced on the edge of the green, then bounced again. (A Scot said "stotted" for " bounced.")

Ran rapidly, slowed over the ridge, tottered on the edge, and fell into the hole. ("Tin" for "hole" in Trans-Atlantic versions.)

"Gosh!" remarked the striker on the tee, "I thought I'd missed it."

Chorus of raconteurs: "I know it's true. The man came from Snake Bite, Michigan. U.S.A."

Editorial comment: "That last sentence is redundant."

DERICK PAGET, • M.F.H. •

By FREDERICK WATSON

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

•

LD JOHN, the kennel huntsman, had just returned from walking out hounds when the message came that the Master wished to see him urgently. When the Master sent it along like that Old John did not light his pipe, or ruminate, or have another look at Damsel's sweaty foot. He gave a holloa to his wife, and went away. He had been with Colonel Derick Paget for twenty seasons, but he never presumed. People didn't with the Colonel. For some reason or another it never occurred to anyone to strike a bright and bantering note with the Master of the Llanfair Hunt. Paget was a silent man, but when he broke silence he was memorable. Old John reckoned he understood him. He had lived so long among horses and hounds that he knew the good 'uns are often the most nappy, and that there's times to let well alone. Life held no mysteries for him. But because the Colonel was unmarried Old John's wife. being a woman, had known the truth all along. She often said her heart bled for the poor gentleman saddled to "sich a' hawful temper wuss than the rector, for all 'is Christian collar."

Old John never agreed or disagreed with her. Much as he disliked the woman, he realised that married life is married life. But he was not entirely crushed. He had his pride. So when Elizabeth carried on about the Colonel, he muttered and snarled like an ancient and indispensable hound when rated by an inexperienced whip. He never answered back That was his strong card. For a quarter of a century Elizabeth had rued the day when she had married a speechless man.

Moreover, it must be admitted the Colonel was a bit of a Tartar. In fact, quite a Tartar. Even for a Master of Hounds. He

had left the Service with a high reputation for strict discipline, and he put the fear of death into the field. In the good old days of Willie Paget, the Colonel's old father, the Hunt had been the most casual affair in the world. Quite like the Christmas Annuals. But things were admittedly different before the South African War. Willie Paget did not have the same post-bag as his son Derick. In the good old days the profiteer had not put down his thousand tame birds, or the smallholder taken up poultry for profit. Wire was not cheap nor abundant, tarmac was unknown, and motors were an amusement rather than a menace.

In dear old Willie's time you could run the Llanfair on five hundred a year and do it top-hole. Poor Derick wilted before the dead weight of kennel and stable expenditure, the poultry fund, the entertainment fund, the Christmas-boxes for keepers, the little here and there which means so much. People said he looked more like an undertaker than a huntsman. He did. He was attending his own funeral, and he knew it. But even then, as Elizabeth had remarked persistently for the last sixteen years, "There's a woman in it—mark my words."

Old John did not mark her words. Instead he shambled along to the Hall and wondered what the Master wanted. It was always best to meet the Master half-way. And never argue. There had been Bill Stokes, the stud groom, as he called himself—though he'd only the gardener's boy half time under him, for all his four horses—Bill Stokes was once so certain he was in the right that he proved the Master wrong. He was lucky to get settled in the Midlands on such short notice.

Old John pushed into the kitchen where Mrs. Heatherington ("Wot a nime, oh my goodness gracious," as Elizabeth had sniggered) was resting before preparing the Colonel's two-course dinner. John always found it useful to learn what was in the wind. Things leaked through. Heatherington, who was elderly, ex-Service, and among other preoccupations cleaned out the Leghorn laying-house in his black coat and the Colonel's old striped Sunday trousers, said he thought something had come in the post. The Master had been comparatively himself, which meant much the same as Vesuvius on visitors' days, until he had opened a letter. He had then shown symptoms of considerable emotion.

"Tantrums?" asked Mrs. Heatherington,

who cherished the Master's prestige.

"No, Mary—not tantrums," corrected Mr. Heatherington in his judicial tone, "more tenterhooks than tantrums."

It was all Basuto to Old John. He gathered there was news, and passed on.

Paget was standing with his back to his meagre fire. He was short of coal, and although there is a legend freely circulated that the Yule log fairly roars up the chimneys of the mansions of England, it is too expensive to fell, carry and saw. Heatherington, assisted by the gardener's boy, split a few damp lengths when he was not cleaning the car, but they simmered into silence and expired. Paget was a tall angular man of forty. His keen face was tightly drawn to the corners of his mouth. His eyes were challenging, impatient, and, to the unobservant person, unsympathetic. He was dressed in a shabby tweed suit, breeches patched and re-patched. An old and rheumatic Airedale sat in the most comfortable chair, a grey muzzled retriever close to the ashes on the hearth. It was a room untidy but symbolic. Only a very thoughtless person would have failed to diagnose the symptoms of a type fast vanishing from English life—the man of education and tradition whose whole existence is part and parcel of the countryside. Rooms like Paget's can still be found here and there, as one discovers in out-of-the-way places specimens of half-forgotten days. On the walls some sporting prints, on the shelves Surtees, Dickens, old yellow-backs, detective stories, with Beckford's Thoughts on Hunting and Fitzwigram's Horses and Stables. On the couch an old pipe and a crop. On the table a hunting-journal, a hound list, a tobacco-jar with college arms on its cracked side, and a heavy electric torch for shutting up at night. Everything old, trustworthy, valueless and comfortable, from the tattered shoes before the open fireplace to the weather-stained shooting-hat on the mantelpiece. In company with that hat were a camp clock, more pipes, photos of dogs, horses, hounds—and one of a woman. It had stood there for many years, and was considerably stained in consequence.

Old John stood just within the door and said nothing. The Colonel stood before the fire and puffed at his long pipe. Leaving a sufficient interval to show Old John he was perfectly composed, he said:

"People are at Wintercombe Hall."

"'Untin' folk," interpolated Old John, who saw no other excuse for miscellaneous existence, and added "according to Elizabeth," with a faint squeak in a back tooth, signifying that extreme caution should be adopted.

"What does Elizabeth know?"

"Know, sir—who can say what that woman knows or doesn't know? It's what she says. According to Elizabeth, family of Ronaldson have taken the place. Old gent and young people. According to Elizabeth, a string of 'unters fit for the shires, sir."

"And we meet on Thursday at Woottons Covert," said the Colonel dismally.

"'Ounds never do nothing there," remarked Old John with a sniff.

"And when they do they never get away," groaned the Colonel. Old John chewed his unshaven upper lip. Then he uttered that confidential squeak on his solitary wisdom tooth. He had an idea.

"If we could only get a decent run," pondered the Colonel, "it would steady'em. It takes a bit of time for new people to get

the hang of our hunt."

"I'd like to see the 'ounds 'as would 'unt a country like ours," asserted Old John, "Let it be the Quorn or the Pytchley, so I say, I do."

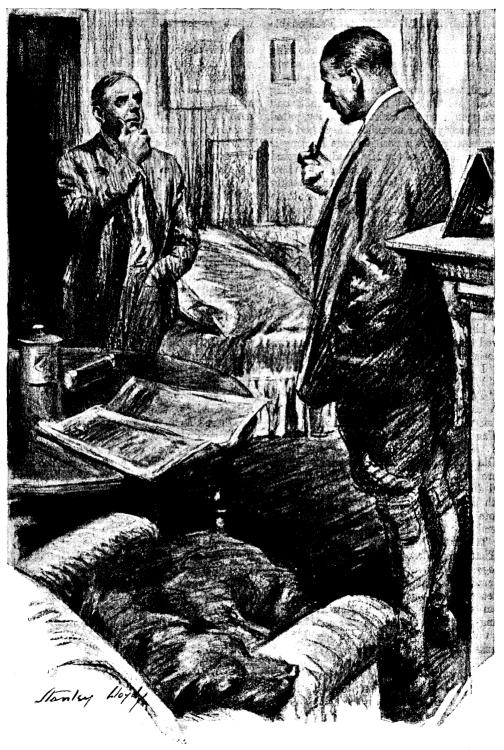
"It isn't that, old lad," said the Colonel, "it's the looks of 'em. Rough-coated you

know, and all sorts and sizes."

"Welsh, sir, is Welsh, and English is English, and wot I says is everyone to his own job, and give me Welsh for a stale scent or a hot scent, or any other manner of scent, for so sure as there's a fox in the county old Conqueror will wind him, that he will, and Damsel will roll him over."

"Yes—yes," interrupted the Colonel with his unmistakable note of impatience, "but will new people stay long enough to know

all that?",



"The Colonel stood before the fire and puffed at his long pipe. Leaving a sufficient interval to show Old John he was perfectly composed, he said: People are at Wintercombe Hall."

Master and Hunt staff stared at each other with mutual restraint. Fashionable strangers either left early never to return. or boxed ostentatiously to the neighbouring Bumper Hunt, whose country, being principally the parks and policies of the lately arrived, was as smooth and safe as a bowling Within that realm they met, and having enjoyed too lavish hospitality, jolted complacently after hounds. Paget had seen for himself what a positive rage hunting is between the end of the Highland season and the beginning of the Riviera, and how splendid they all looked in the weekly fashionable Press. But there was no help in the thought. He must continue to carry on in the same old way until he could carry on no longer.

"Right," he said. "Push along, John. Take out sixteen couple but leave old Chorister. He is a bit too much for stran-

gers."

There was a silence. John loved old Chorister. He loved his shaggy coat and his kind amber eyes. But best of all he loved that clarion note thrice repeated when Chorister spoke to fox.

"I know, sir, I have it."

"What?"

"I'll tell Henry to keep old Chorister in the car, sir, until 'ounds are in covert. Then we'll slip him in secret-like."

Paget nodded. He had, of course, thought

out that way himself.

Old John went slowly homeward. Then, more briskly, he went past the Kennels and down to the village post office. There, with his tongue carefully protruded, he wrote out a telegram to a professional friend. It read, "Charles wanted perticler for Thursday. Jack."

That concluded, he retired to the *Green Dragon*, and over a little stimulant considered by what means—fair or foul—the Meet at Woottons Covert could be turned from a traditional humiliation into something which would make the new people sit up jolly straight, and even knock some sparks out of the Bumpers.

II.

PAGET had tried to work out his debit account the night before and reached Kennels for the Woottons Covert Meet on the sharp side. But do what he would a smile crept over his thin face at the spectacle before him. There was Old John in a scarlet coat Elizabeth had worked on for days, nearly white breeches and shining patched boots.

There were the hounds, all spotless, pure white, lemon and white and tan. There was Henry in a coat borrowed from a cousin in the Midlands. And there was the gardener's boy in harrier green four sizes too large in charge of the terriers. The horses, good old Deemster the grey, Robin and Marigold, were all glossy, and staring with mild eyes at the familiar faces of Damsel, Conqueror, Angel and Chorister, who were baying at the prospect of bustling a fox to a finish.

"A bit of a splash, John," said the Master.

"You wait, sir," whispered that ancient man; "you go easy. I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't kill in the 'eart of the Bumpers' country."

"Push on," said the Master with an unworthy suspicion of alcohol, "we're

late."

They pushed on. And all the way down the narrow mountainous lanes towards Woottons Covert Paget wondered how he could face the bald fact that with an overdraft of five hundred the time was drawing near when the horn would sound "going home" for the last night of all. associations, like old teeth, are hard to draw, and they leave their pang and emptiness behind. But the Llanfair hounds had weathered so many storms it was difficult to believe that the Kennels would stand deserted, until, as years passed, the doors would creak on their rusted hinges, the roof sag, and the rain drip on to leaf-sodden floors.

The Master jogged on. Behind him the pack, rough-coated, smooth-coated, large and small, sixth season to newly entered, pattered over the moist road, sterns up, well muscled, and at their tail Old John, with his admonishing cry of "Forrard along" when hounds lingered on a taint of scent.

They turned the corner and there on the village green were a small group of farmers and neighbours, a good keen lot, if greatly deficient in worldly gear. They had been brought up with the hounds, had fought with the Master (those of them who returned), and that was all about it. They would be sorry—Paget knew—when the old show went west.

He drew up, and Old John and Henry exchanged a significant and intimate glance. Coming down the village street, led by a fierce old gentleman on a grey weight-carrier with a Roman nose, were the new people

from Wintercombe Hall. There was a pretty girl of about fourteen on a bright bay, a boy of eight on a black pony, and a supercilious man in the thirties in hunting pink mounted on a thoroughbred fit for high Leicestershire. Derick Paget summed them up with a steady glance. Old boy the right stuff, kids sound enough, young man the outside edge so far as the Llanfair was concerned.

The old gentleman whipped off his hat and introduced himself. He said he hoped he might take an interest in the Hunt, and under Paget's searching gaze looked over the hounds without symptoms of astonishment or frank amusement. Paget was not so sure of the young man. But the girl was a stunner. Make a fine woman some

"My granddaughter," said the old chap. She met Paget's straight gaze with honest grey eyes, and he turned abruptly away. How like she was, how astoundingly like! Name of Ronaldson. No light there. But it was as though sixteen years had slipped.

He looked at his watch. Ten minutes' grace over. He gave a whistle to hounds, the rough and ready Llanfairs scrambled up, and they were off down the lane towards Woottons.

It was always a very hopeless place. But with undaunted spirit Old John made off to the end of the larches, and the Master threw hounds into covert. He might as well have thrown them into one of the minor forests of the Amazon. Here there were brambles and there were rocks, and if rocks took a second place it was to gorse. A splendid place for foxes but not for hounds. A Pekinese could have put up a fox, but all the Midland packs couldn't have pushed him on to grass. He simply ducked and dived and lay doggo before he shoved a colleague before a hysterical and exhausted pack. After an hour or two of that sort of thing Welsh hounds, who must hunt something, take to stray rabbits and an occasional hare, or to the domestic cat, and the day goes down in deep humiliation and shame. That particular Meet likely to prove even more disastrous, considering the hopes centred round the newcomers, because the Bumpers were meeting just below in the vale.

And then a hound whimpered uncertainly. There was nothing in that except that it was near the top spinney, where foxes seldom take the risk of being shoved out into open country.

"Leu in, leu in," encouraged Paget.

Then Chorister spoke, which meant busi-But still there was no saying. Once a fox ran back he was as safe as a bee in a skep. Suddenly, to Paget's amazement, a piercing View Holloa rang out from below, Henry's voice pealing the "gone away."

Old John turned up from nowhere. Paget tooted his horn, hounds came streaming out of covert, and suddenly, with a prolonged burst of music, took up old Chorister's note and were gone as only Welsh hounds can go over moorland.

Masters who hunt in the cream of the Midlands don't know how goodly are the gifts of Providence. So long as they have a horse and the heart to ride him they stay with hounds. To stay with a Welsh pack calls for a goat or an aeroplane. Paget knew every inch of the country and he acted accordingly. He popped old Deemster over a post and rails, took a hedge with a drop on to a lane, cantered along it until he reached a precipitous field, tobogganed down it, jumped a deep mountain brook, and joined hounds at a place where it seemed as though a man must surely enter one of the pools of peat-brown water and bid farewell to an indifferent world. That was all right. A fox sometimes took a delight in pretending he was really running. But this fox never swerved on his brush for safety. He went straight. He headed like a good 'un for the cream of the Bumpers' country. It was unbelievable but it was happening. Paget could not resist a glance at the old boy Ronaldson, who to his grudging surprise had worried through.

"We're in for a run, sir," shouted the old man. "Never seen better hound work."

Golden words. What Master of a pack of scallywags can hear them without loving the fellow who so imperils his immortal soul?

Behind Ronaldson was that girl, and again there passed into Paget's heart a sudden pang of memory.

"They're running straight for Leebot," velled Old John. "Cheer 'em on, sir."

"Hold your tongue," roared the Master indignantly, "or I'll send you home."

But he cheered them on and blew them on and they were out of the hill land and in the vale. Hounds paced on a breast-high Old Harmony, who had saved many a check from degenerating into a defeat and who dearly loved to hang on the line, fell back and uttered dismal tongue. They were going too fast. Young hounds on a hot scent think the game is ended when it is only begun. "Hold up," whimpered old Harmony, "or you'll flash a ten-acre field over the line." But they never paused—they never faltered. With Chorister leading, they sped, all kinds and sizes, across a turf over which scent seemed to hover like a guardian angel. And behind, riding wide, came Paget and Old John, and Ronaldson and that girl who was so like someone of whom Paget would never think again, and the young man looking rather scared, and the farmers already the heroes of a score of falls, galloping in a clump like blazes.

The truth of the matter was this. They were now well into the Bumpers' country and running straight for their pet covert. Moreover, and here was the cream of the jest, the Bumpers were at that moment jogging along behind their excellently appointed pack with every appearance of extreme opulence and self-esteem. Their hounds were wonderfully bred, their Kennels the last word in modern fittings, their Huntsman the most expensive in three counties, and their hunters one and all the admiration of Tattersalls.

Coming dead at them, just as Charlie Slowcall, their courtly huntsman, threw his hounds into their best covert and carolled his magnificent and highly trained tenor, were the Llanfairs all going like steam, Chorister leading the pack with his deep, bell-like contralto. With what a cry they breasted the slope! With what a triumphant burst of music they viewed their fox on the river-bank and knew they had him stiff. How greatly mistaken were they. . . . It was at that historic moment the Bumpers, coffee-housing in the dell below, stared one at another, and within the covert Slowcall questioned whether such a thing could be.

Paget, taking a blackthorn more or less but coming to earth, grasped the situation with his keen steady eyes and grinned. He saw old Ponderbury, the Master of the Bumpers, who had taken to hunting after a most successful career in adulterated foodstuffs, and liked it run on quiet business principles. He saw Captain Grayling, the assiduous Secretary, a very diplomatic young man with a famous smile for all occasions now suddenly switched off. He saw the field swinging round, and then he saw only a stiff post and rails with a ditch on the take-off side. There was no question it must be taken. Hounds were running Moreover, the Bumpers were watching to a man. Paget knew that Deemster did

not care about it. The old horse knew his limits, and he was never a good one at a wide place. But there it was. Behind him came Old John, cheering on tail hounds in a voice that brought the outraged Slowcall to the covert side. John was on Marigold —a big show-jumping mare who loved a trappy place. He saw how it was and took a liberty. He knew it was the "sack" for him, but he also knew they were making history that day. He shoved Marigold past the Master, rammed her two lengths ahead, and was over with six feet to spare. Now old Deemster had a stable love for Marigold. who stood in the next box and rubbed her velvet muzzle through the bars. He doubled his pace and, taking off, cleared the lot with as little to spare as doesn't matter.

The Bumpers listened no longer. cry of those barbaric hounds, all sorts and sizes, was enough for them. They did not ask Slowcall whether he was coming or not. They were off, leaving the Master to glare at the Secretary, and the Secretary about to glare at the Huntsman, when the most terrible thing of all happened. The Bumpers' hounds, having stood and waved their sterns, were suddenly overcome by that ringing cry now nearing them again, and with unanimous consent took up the old line, and throwing their melodious and expensive tongue, were also part and parcel of that remarkable affair. At which old Ponderbury turned to the Secretary, and the Secretary turned to the Huntsman, and without a word—but avoiding that nasty post and rails—they also joined in.

III.

If a man has any decent port left nowadays and enough coal to warm his legs he will still drink a toast to that wonderful fox. He will strongly vow that of all famous Charleses of poetry and prose that particular one deserved something fairly substantial. The common or garden fox runs with a purpose. It may be one earth or it may be another, or it may—as in hill foxes be simply a precipitous range of rocks over which elated hounds commit hari-kari, but he has his plan. This fox simply ran for the fun of it. Instead of going to ground in the badgers' earth in Sawbens Wood, he loped gaily over it, and though he seemed done to the wide he kept nicely ahead. He took them over parts of the Bumpers' country they had never hoped to see, and which they pray they will never see again. No fox has ever been known to sink Hebditches Dingle and scale the other side, for the jolly good reason he could take the foot-bridge. But this fox did and swam the brook as well, instead of running the fallen willow tree. A sportsman, they all gasped then and swore afterwards, though some wished he wouldn't take such a frightful line of country.

Paget was soon aware that the Bumpers were on his heels. Squinting over his shoulder, he saw on his right a woman on a blood chestnut keeping the same steady pace and the same discreet distance. hate 'em riding in my pocket," was one of Paget's condemnations of a field. And yet he was sorry she did not come nearer. Something in the way she landed on treacherous ground recalled someone else who had the neatest sense of recovery he had ever seen. Suddenly hounds swinging left, she was in the same field, and he saw that she was older than he had thought, in fact about thirty-five. He had reined Hounds were feathering at a check. Away to their left that wonderful old fellow Ronaldson was holding up his topper. But for the life of him Paget couldn't collect his thoughts. Hounds casting with the deliberate technique of a hill pack who kill by time as much as by pace were badly off the line. In the rear in full cry were the Bumpers. It was now or never. But instead of casting towards old Ronaldson he turned deliberately and looked at her.

"You," he said grimly, after a long pause. She did not reply. In the strained silence hounds casting their wide half-circle struck the line and Hengist opened with his shrill clarion note. None but the newly entered trusted Hengist. He had a following of green raking first-seasoners.

Paget turned abruptly away. But in a flash it had all come back to him. memory of that quarrel about nothing. The long silence. Her photograph in the illustrated papers when she married. then the longer silence which had fallen with finality. It had been, of course, his fault. There was no temper so dour as the Paget one. He remembered again the desolate years and was overtaken by a new sense of catastrophe. Was she living near him? If so, he would pack up and go. He would go now; just as he had gone that summer evening long ago.

Old Ronaldson was standing on the opposite bank, watching them keenly with his shrewd fierce eyes. He seemed suddenly indifferent to fox and hounds.

"Derick," she said.

He made no sign he had heard, but, pulling Deemster in the opposite direction to her, galloped straight for the wood where hounds were giving tongue. From the boggy pasture there rose a heavy thorn fence. Old Ronaldson knew how it would be. So, as a matter of fact, did Paget. The Bumpers, reaching the top and pausing for a breather, saw that for some unknown reason the Master of that amazing pack was now really riding for a fall. They awaited the crash and shook their heads. It seemed a pity to mar the run of their lives like that.

Old John saw it coming. He yelled a frenzied warning. He rode with rage and misery in his heart. What had come over the Master, always brave but always fair to an 'oss. Finally, old Deemster pricked his ears and cocked his ancient head. He saw the take-off was as full of water as a bin of oats. He knew there was neither give nor take in that hedge. he was one of those who never turn their heads, and who place an infinite trust in the man they partner over a country. There was a chance—not much of a one—but still a chance. There was one place where the timber was perished and green with moss. He quickened, put in a short one, and taking off from his hocks, hit the weak spot fair and square just five feet above the roots. There was a deafening crash, a moment of suspense, and then Deemster and his Master disappeared on the other side.

"Is he down?" yelled Old John. the Master down?"

"Both down," shouted old Ronaldson.

"Be quick there."

The Bumpers' hounds had raced past and were in the wood. The fox, done to the wide, had circled and checked, and was creeping along the fence where Paget lay with Deemster all caught up and winded beside him. Things happened swiftly then. Everyone and everything seemed to shove along just as fast as legs and horses could carry them. Old Ronaldson moved surprisingly, but not so surprisingly as Old John, and most surprising of all was that woman who had called the Master "Derick."

Old John was a marvel at slipping off a saddle, hitching his snaffle rein over anywhere, and getting to horse or hound, or

a worry, or a fall.

"Not 'urt, sir?" he gasped without hope. It was always his question when things looked bad: otherwise he said, "Nab the 'orse, sir," which was usually more im-

portant.

"Leg," said the Master, who had every reason to speak with the authority of an orthopædic specialist.

"I knew it," wailed Old John. "What

came to you, sir?"
"Tell the Field to shut their noise," ordered the Master. "Look."

The fox was creeping nearer them. Nearer also were coming the Bumpers' hounds, now The pack came as a pack will only to a tried and trusted voice. Old John knew the moment had arrived. He, too, lifted his ancient head, screwed up his mouth, half closed his wicked eyes, and uttered his shriek of "Whoop-tear him up-Whooop, Who-oop." The pack came driving through the undergrowth. They had him cornered under the bank where the Master lay. It was over. The hunt belonged to history.



thoroughly alive to the rank scent.

"Where's Conqueror?" groaned the Master. "They'll kill him before ours are up."

Old John expanded his wry mouth. He had seen the hound, wise and ruthless, working the hedgerow. At that moment he threw his tongue and leaped forward.

The Bumpers' hounds, taking up the line, arrived to wind the place where Charles had made a gallant exit, expecting no quarter, and slashing the hilarious Hector -ever a thrusting impudent hound-with his keen unconquerable fangs.

It was over. Deemster, who was the kind of horse it is more difficult to get up than to get down, was persuaded to make an effort. Old John concluded in his shrill falsetto the final objurgations to young and timid hounds to "tear the varmint"; the Field drew aside to ask one another whether such a run would ever happen again, and She was there—waiting.

"Derick," she said in that low unforgettable voice of hers.

Before the doctor. Just as though there was no one there. How like her—how like Doreen. No sense of the decencies. She



"Instead of casting towards old Ronaldson, Paget turned deliberately and looked at her. 'You,' he said grimly, after a long pause."

the doctor member of the Bumpers leant over Paget.

"Not a bad run," said the Master.

"Are you in pain?"

"Just seventy minutes," said the Master, and stared over the doctor's shoulder with a darkening eye.

never had. Least of all when she married whomever she had married. And yet there she stood, as lovely as ever. Older of course, but as one nudges the middle years one gets to recognise beauties beyond their youth. He lay and regarded her with his inscrutable eyes and in the immensity of his habitual

reticence, and the doctor, feeling a little self-conscious, eddied away, and was lost in the excited tumult of united Llanfairs and Bumpers.

"Won't you speak to me, Derick?"

"Who are you now?"

"Mrs. Ronaldson."

"Living here?"

She nodded, with tears mounting to her

"We've just come. I'm sorry. I didn't

know."

"How could you? Don't worry about that."

"Are you hurt, Derick?"

"No. Would you please call my Whip?" She hesitated a moment and then slipped on her knees beside him.

"Derick," she said, "I'm sorry. I didn't

know. I mean——"

"Where's your husband?" he asked abruptly.

"Dead. Why didn't you write me, Derick?"

Before he could reply old Ronaldson with John burst in on them.

"We've got the car on the lane now," he said briskly. "We'll hoist you in in no time. Our house, as you know, is just here, and when you're in bed we'll see."

Despite outraged vituperations, stalwart arms lifted the indignant Paget and bore him away. They laid him in the landaulette, the chauffeur sprang in front, and Doreen Ronaldson quite calmly took her

place inside.

The car disappeared, and the old gentleman turned to John and said with a discreet exchange of paper, "You're a good fellow, and you've done that Master of

yours the best turn in the world to-

day."

"I only 'opes," said Old John, pocketing the cash, "that she's good enough, but I saw at a glance the poor Master was fairly found and run to ground and no mistake, so here's good luck, for as the Missus always said—drat her—'There's a woman in it somewheres,' and now I've seen 'er I don't blame 'im. Good luck to 'em, says I, though a broken leg in the 'eart of the season is a high price for any woman, that it be."

A CONJUGAL SACRIFICE.

(A scientist has declared that fog is a wonderful help in the cultivation of a good complexion.)

I once was absolutely keen
On leaving town behind
And in some placid sylvan scene
Endeavouring to find
A cottage and, did funds allow,
Three acres with, perhaps, a cow.

I seemed to recognize in this My spiritual home, And I was quite prepared to miss My favourite picturedrome, Where Dauntless Daphne's on the road Toward her hundredth episode.

But now my dream is laid aside; For sake of my Elaine
To town irrevocably tied
I'm destined to remain;
And life henceforward will become
One altruistic martyrdom.

For since 'tis largely murk and gloom, As I have just found out, Preserves for her that schoolgirl bloom You may have read about, To take her to an air less thick Would be indeed a dirty trick.

And in my breast a sense of guilt Would certainly arise On seeing her complexion wilt, When under clearer skies 'Twas all in vain for her to seek An atmospheric cosmétique.

F. Hodgkinson.



LAPLANDERS FOLLOWING THEIR REINDEER ON MIGRATION.

IN THE SUMMER HOME OF SANTA CLAUS • •

'MID LEMMINGS AND LAPPS

By CARVETH WELLS

F you find any lemmings in Lapland, bring some back with you," suggested Dr. F. A. Lucas with a twinkle in his eye as I said good-bye to him that summer in New York. I promised the Honorary Director of the American Museum of Natural History that I would; but little did I think at the time that within six weeks I should actually see a migration, the first to occur in Lapland for eighteen years, of the mysterious little animals.

It was midnight, and the sun was still shining brightly on the lake when Clyde Fisher and I, who had been invited to accompany Tuolja, the Lapp, and his family on their annual summer journey to the mountains, reached the base of Stora Sjofallet, the highest waterfall in Lapland. The water was going over green, tumbling vertically about ninety feet. In order to avoid the fall and reach the upper level of the lake beyond it, we had to portage the boats for about a mile. And the first thing I observed when I landed was the dead body of a little animal about as large as a rat. It was a lemming!

Earlier in the day a wise old snowy owl, perched on a rock near the shore, had already warned us, by his presence, that the lemmings were coming. And no sooner had we

seen him than we discovered a nest containing four little hawks, the young of the roughlegged buzzard, another bird attracted to Lapland during a migration of the lemmings.

I immediately went off into the wilds to see what I could. Clambering over great rounded boulders covered with moss and lichens, sometimes sinking almost to my knees in the thick, velvety blanket of moss and dwarf birch, I disturbed a covey of ptarmigan. A moment afterwards I heard a strange little noise, a cross between a whine and a complaining bark. Then, close at my feet, sitting upon its hind legs and show-

only specimen in Lapland! For so small an animal, it proved to be extremely brave. As soon as it discovered that no fewer than three persons had invaded its sacred plot of land, it began to attack each of us in turn, barking, fighting, and jumping sometimes two feet into the air. At the end of the scrimmage, however, I caught Mr. Lemming alive by persuading him to jump clean into my hat, whence I transferred him into Clyde Fisher's camera-case. Before going to bed, I gave Mr. Lemming about twice his own weight of grass. Just as I had dropped off to sleep, a scratching sound awakened me; I



[E. N. A.

ABISKO AND LAKE TORNETRASK.

Here the midnight sun can be seen for two months without the risk of seasickness.

ing its teeth, I saw my first live lemming. It was a pretty little animal, much like a medium-sized guinea-pig. Its fur was a rich golden brown, with grey under the jaws and neck. Evidently Mr. Lemming was angry; for, jumping up at my legs, snapping and snarling, he furiously attacked me. I retreated a few paces, and immediately the little chap calmed down and began eating some heather, taking no notice of me.

That I knew nothing about lemmings was obvious to Tuolja. I was so "het up" with excitement at seeing my first lemming that I shouted for my little motion-picture camera and took reels of film, in case it might be the

discovered that the little animal had eaten all the grass and, in addition, most of the velvet lining of the camera-case.

The next day, as our journey continued, we came upon millions of lemmings. According to my estimate, they covered a strip of Lapland at least twenty miles wide. I had always pictured a lemming migration as a vast swarm of animals packed closely together. Instead, I found that each lemming claimed as its preserve an area measuring ten feet by ten. Left alone, it would remain motionless, except for the movement of the jaws while eating. But there was constant trespassing. And, since a lemming has a

highly developed sense of proprietorship, immediately a chase and a fight began. Also, there was continual migration, although upon a casual survey of the countryside, the actual steady forward movement was not apparent.

"Where do they all come from?" I asked

Tuolja.

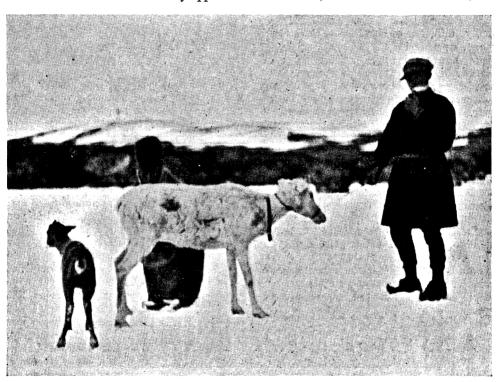
"From Heaven," he replied, pointing to the sky.

"Where do they go?"

Tuolja did not know. All he could tell me was that the animals suddenly appear in them. Assuming that there was one to every hundred square feet (a very moderate estimate), there must have been some three hundred millions in all. It is not surprising, therefore, that a migration, representing an abundance of food, attracts bears, wolves, foxes, ermines, wildcats, weasels, hawks and owls.

Our dogs, Musti, Svarti, Rinki and Jaffa, had the time of their lives, dashing about and seizing the little animals and snapping off their heads.

The coats, about the size of moleskins, are



A FULL-GROWN REINDEER WITH BABY. MILKING INTO A BIRCH BOWL.

myriads, slowly eating their way across the country into the lowlands. The highest mountains and the widest lakes are no obstacles. Eventually, sometimes after a steady journey lasting two years, they reach the sea. Here they are crowded into a great mass. If one is pushed into the water, he begins to swim. Blindly the others follow the leader, and on they go, swimming to destruction.

A week later found our little party sixty miles farther north. There, too, the countryside was swarming with the rodents. Upon inquiry I learned that lemmings were still passing the place where we had first seen

extremely pretty. Since lemmings could be caught by the thousand, it seems extraordinary that the fur has not yet been placed on the market.

Normally a lemming breeds twice a year, producing five or six in a litter, and, of these, only one or two survive and breed. But during a "lemming year," for reasons unknown, all the young survive, and, since all have large families, the country suddenly becomes over-population. This over-population causes starvation. Thereupon the animals desert their homes and seek new pastures. According to the Lapps, the lemmings go mad. Forced to hunt for food,

they set out, but have not the sense to stop.

The inexplicable thing is: Where are the lemmings between migrations? Every Lapp or Swede who has studied the matter will tell you that at the end of a migration not a single lemming will be seen for years, until suddenly millions appear, apparently from nowhere. England similar

migrations occur among voles. In structure, however, a lemming is very different from a vole. It has longer claws and thicker, and an extremely short tail, with hair on the soles of its feet and very small ears.

The strangest vegetable growth in the world is probably the lichen. Frequently we found rocks covered with lichens that were youthful at the time of the Norman Conquest and only middle-aged when we saw them. An abundance of lichens in any locality denotes absolutely pure air. Lapland abounds in these scaly growths. Were it not for a certain kind, which the Lapps call reindeer-moss, there would probably be no Lapps in Lapland; for this lichen is as essen-



tial to the reindeer as is the reindeer to the Lapps. The Lapps live on reindeer, and the reindeer live on lichen.

The importance the Lapp attaches to the reindeer is indicated by the fact that there are in his language more than three hundred words relating to it. No one seems to know when or how the Lapps became associated with the reindeer. Once when I questioned Johan Turi, Lapland's philosopher and wolf-hunter, he said: "I cannot tell you where we come from, but I know this, that we Lapps have always been scared away by the approach of other people. If this had not happened, then perhaps we should not have become nomads, but we might have taken to building houses, and living like

other folks. But we fled before strange people just as the wild reindeer did. The Lapps and the reindeer ran away together. We were companions in adversity and have lived together ever since."

As I proved to be a good listener, Turi grew eloquent. He soon revealed that he was a lover of animals. "Man often acts toward an animal as if he had less sense than the animal," he declared. "For instance, the proper load for a pack-reindeer is from eighty to a hundred kilograms, but some men load him with more than he can carry, and, being a dumb animal, the only



A LAPP SECONDARY SCHOOL.



A LAPP BABY WITH GUARDIAN DOG.
When a baby is born it is endowed with a dog or a reindeer.

way in which he can make known any complaint is by lying down! Still, man is so foolish that he thinks unwillingness, and not exhaustion, made the deer lie down, and then he beats him. Some men, therefore, have not the sense to think as the reindeer thinks."

All the reindeer meat is preserved by being smoked and dried; it is eaten uncooked, cut into thin shavings with a very sharp knife. But the most prized of all parts of a reindeer are the marrow bones. Barter for ancient marrow-bones is about the only commercial transaction carried on between Lapps. The sinews are carefully preserved and made into thread and fishing-lines. Winter clothes are made of reindeer skin with the hair left on. For the skin of summer clothes, the hair is removed by leaving the hide in running water for a week or two. All kinds of useful implements and tools are made from the antlers.

For hundreds of years the reindeer have migrated to the highlands of Lapland every spring, returning to the wooded lowlands in the fall. And the Lapps have followed them. So closely do they keep to the same route in these annual migrations that the same fireplaces can be used year after year, and one encampment is as much a home as another. Lapps, therefore, are continually experiencing the joys of home-coming. When Tuolja and his family arrived at the base of Mount Akka last July, their joy, as

well as that of the dogs, was quite apparent. Long before the boat touched shore, Svarti, Rinki and Jaffa, the three junior dogs, leaped overboard and began to swim. Tuolia nudged me with a "Watch Musti!" and indicated the chief dog, standing in the bow of the viking-like boat." "He has sense. He doesn't intend to get wet and still he will land first!" Surely enough, while the boat was a good eight feet from shore and the other three dogs were swimming eagerly to land, Musti gathered himself together; with a leap worthy of a circus dog he sprang to dry land and began frisking about, wagging his tail, obviously quite aware of the fact that he had outwitted his brothers. As they landed, one by one, shaking and shivering, Musti barked at them in derision.

With a bump the boat stopped, and out sprang the three white goats that seemed part of the household, followed by Tuolja, who gently helped ashore little Sigga, the baby. As soon as she landed, her dog guardian approached and took charge of her, while the rest of the family disembarked and unloaded the boat. Meanwhile the other dogs and the goats, recognising familiar landmarks, began rushing about their old home. Two of the goats evidently remembered their best grazing-ground; for they raced unhesitatingly to a particular spot where, within a few minutes, they were feed-



TUOLIA'S BABIES.

ing peacefully. About a hundred yards inland, Tuolja and the boys located their fireplace of the year before. Within fifteen minutes the parabolic framework of the Lapp tent was erected and covered with a kind of blanket cloth. As soon as the fire was lighted, Inka, Tuolja's better half, put the kettle on and began to prepare the coffee.

When there are many small children in a family, the Lapps, whose country, with its

countless lakes. is half submerged, use boats in preference to pack-reindeer for their migrations. It often happens that little boys and girls seldom see a herd of reindeer; consequently there was great excitement in the tent when Tuolja announced that a large herd was close to camp and that in the morning we would all go and watch them.

Just before we turned in that day (there was no night) an incident occurred illustrates the superstitious nature of the Lapps. Musti, the chief dog, was sitting gazing into the fire with a straw in his mouth. Tuolia, noticing

the straw in the dog's mouth, exclaimed, "Ah! a guest is coming to visit us."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the door opened and in walked an elderly, weather-beaten Swede. Without further ceremony than the usual Lapp words of greeting, "Puorist! Puorist!" the old Swede sat down near the old doorway, the place that etiquette requires a stranger to occupy until he is beckoned to a better seat by his host. After a silence of several minutes. Tuolia invited the stranger to sit beside

him, while Inka offered him some coffee. Enbom, for such was the Swede's name, took from his pocket a cup, beautifully carved from a solid piece of birch, which he held out for Inka to fill. Helping himself to a lump of sugar, he placed the sugar in his mouth and sipped the hot coffee through the sugar. Then he produced three strangely shaped pieces of paper, and in a few minutes he and Tuolia were in earnest conversation.

> Every now and then Tuolja would pick up one of the pieces of paper closely examine it. I saw him take some birchbark and with his sharp knife carefully cut out the shape of a reindeer's ear. Then he made three V-shaped notches in the top edge and cut off the tip of the "All my ear. reindeer have ears like that." he exclaimed. 'See how different they are from the three samples

Turning from me, Dr. Bergstrom, the interpreter and guide sent by the Swedish Government to accompany us through Lapland, explained: "En-

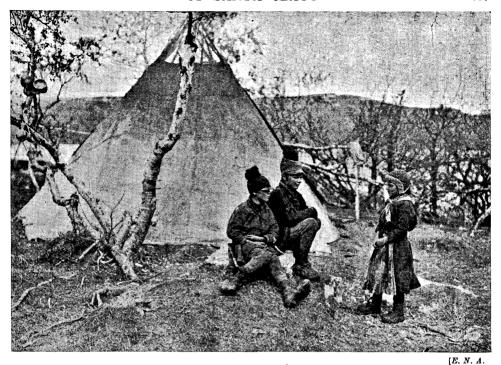


IDENTIFYING REINDEER BY THE SHAPE OF THEIR EARS AS SEEN THROUGH FIELD-GLASSES.

bom is a Government inspector of reindeer. He says that some Lapps from another district near by have reported the loss of several deer and that he is trying to trace them."

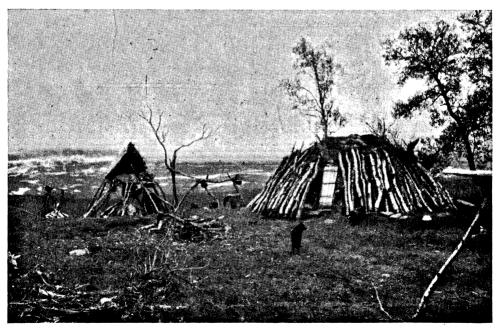
Soon I discovered that every Lapp can identify his reindeer by marks branded or cut into their ears and that the Swedish authorities keep a record of all registered reindeer ears.

"But how on earth can Tuolja find out if there happens to be a stray reindeer in his herd of several hundred?" I inquired in



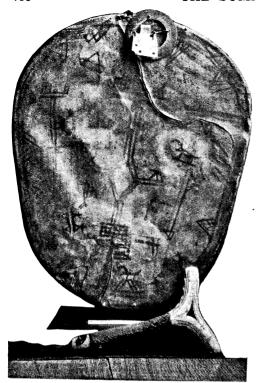
LAPP CHILDREN, WITH KÅTA, OR TENT.

The tent is mathematically constructed upon a framework of conic sections.



SOME LAPPS HAVE GIVEN UP USING TENTS AND USE A SERIES OF HOUSES BUILT SEVERAL MILES APART.

The photograph shows a house with its larder.



FRONT VIEW OF A DIVINING-DRUM, BY MEANS OF WHICH LOST REINDEER ARE LOCATED.

astonishment; for I knew that reindeer are by no means the tame, domesticated animals they are often thought to be. I had seen herds madly gallop off before we could get within a quarter of a mile of them.

"Oh, he will use his field-glasses and examine their ears," replied Dr. Bergstrom.

I remembered that many of the Lapps I had met carried powerful field-glasses, but I could not believe that even with their aid a man could pick out one particular deer by noting the shape of its ear. However, the next morning I saw it done. Carrying the sample ears, Tuolja and Enbom went to the top of a slight prominence, and there Tuolja began to inspect his herd through the glasses.

"Let me try, Tuolja," I requested. But for the life of me I could not discern any kind of mark on their ears. I am supposed to have exceptionally good sight—I used a surveyor's transit for years and have been accustomed to look at tiny objects at great distances—but, try as I would, all the ears looked exactly alike.

Tuolja laughed. Placing the glasses to his own eyes, he looked intently for several minutes. Suddenly, addressing Enbom, he exclaimed: "There are two strange deer, and one of them has ears like the ones you seek."

While he was speaking, a part of the herd was moving slowly across the snowfield; some were lying down in the snow. Their antlers were still in the velvet. Unlike other species, the female as well as the male of the Lapland reindeer has antlers, which, of course, are shed annually.

Having located the missing deer, Tuolia set out to catch them. He called Musti and his gang, but said nothing further. He merely beckoned, and the dogs dashed off. In a few minutes they had rounded up the herd and forced the deer into a compact mass by running round and round them. Tuolja then advanced with his lasso, and, in less time than it takes to tell, had roped one of the strangers. The reindeer bucked and struggled to free itself as Tuolia approached, passing the rope over hand. When he reached the animal, he unceremoniously seized it by one of its hind legs and dragged it backward in spite of its struggles. Not till then had I realised how small a Lapp reindeer is. A Lapp himself is only about five feet high, and most of the reindeer come only to his waist.

Tuolja's use of field-glasses formed a sharp contrast to the method of his ancestors. In olden days lost reindeer were located by



BACK VIEW OF DIVINING-DRUM.

means of a divining-drum, oval in shape, measuring about eighteen inches at the largest, and twelve inches at the smallest diameter. Upon a skin stretched across the drum was drawn a map of the locality. This map carried a secret of the magic power of the drum. To locate a lost reindeer the Lapp held the drum in his left hand, with the surface horizontal and level. On the map he

placed a small iron ring, about an inch in diameter. Then he tapped the side with a small hammer, held in his right hand. The blows caused the drum to vibrate so that the metal ring danced from place to place. Sooner or later, as the vibrations diminis hed or ceased, the ring would settle down on the map; and there was the spot where the missing reindeer was to be sought! If it was not found, it

must have wandered off somewhere else; so the drum was consulted again, until with perseverance the lost animal was located.

One day Tuolja was doctoring a sore on his hand, and as he was in a communicative mood, I plied him with questions regarding the treatment of disease. As far as I had discovered, there were no Lapp doctors. The following medical hints may come in useful to the reader. Toothache is cured by

filling a hollow tooth with tinder and igniting it! Blood-poisoning is cured by saying: "That which has come from the mortal body of man shall there be no room for here; I order it away by the power of the Lord Christ! Peace and health be to this person!" In saying this, care must be taken to look intently at the sick spot; and it is best to wear spectacles to protect the eyes from evil.

The following infallibleremedy for swelling might be tested: take some old sail-cloth preferably inherited cloth-soak it in tar, set fire to it and, when it is burning cheerily, apply it to the swollen part. Finally, Tuolja told me that the best cure for stomach ache is to lie down and allow a dog to curl up and go to sleep on your stomach. Very soon the dog will get the stomach ache, having drawn it out of your body.



A LAPP THROWING A LASSO.

Our route now lay across the high mountains into Norway, and, with the arrival of the five sturdy Karesuando Lapps who were to carry our equipment, we packed and started on a sixteen-hour tramp. The higher we climbed, the colder it became; but in spite of surrounding snowfields we were attacked by swarms of mosquitoes. Here, too, we were surprised to find a frog,

the only one we saw in the Arctic. The Lapland frog, we were told, does not migrate. What he does with himself when the temperature falls to seventy below, I cannot imagine. Every now and then we passed large ant-hills, some of them three or four feet high. Beautiful little blue butterflies and some larger dark-red ones were quite common. As for the moths, they, not knowing whether it was day or night, seemed to have decided to fly all the time. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I found large patches of yellow violets growing in places where, a few weeks before, deep snow had lain.

Suddenly Fisher and I exclaimed simultaneously, "Look! Pink snow!" For we really saw plenty of the beautiful rose-coloured snow about which we had read so much. Under the microscope it revealed that it was mixed with a minute, pink, vegetable growth.

At midnight we crossed the border into Norway, and almost without warning we found ourselves looking down thousands of feet into one of the most beautiful fjords. At its very end was Hellembotten, "the bottom of hell," a tiny settlement of wooden houses built by two Lapp fisher-families. Life there was made exciting by Nature: enormous boulders, much bigger than the houses, would periodically crash down the almost vertical sides of the fjord and roll among the houses. So far, the little settlement had survived.

So far, in all our travels in Lapland, we had not seen a single church. Our explorations could scarcely be regarded as complete, therefore, unless we made a pilgrimage to the celebrated church of Jokkmokk. The Lapps do all their churchgoing in the winter, and it was deserted when we saw it in July. If a Lapp dies during the summer, he is buried on an island. We saw several of the "islands of the dead." When the cold weather comes, the people exhume their dead, place them on special burial-sledges and take them to church, in order that they may be reburied with the rites of the Laestadian religion. At the same time all their baptisms and marriages are performed. The annual churchgoing lasts for weeks, until the Lapps have performed all the accumulated religious ceremonies of the previous summer.

The long winter nights afford the people plenty of opportunity for the practice of art. Lapps are expert at etching upon reindeer antlers, and most of their implements are beautifully decorated with designs that are

either purely ornamental or depict familiar incidents, such as lassoing a reindeer, hunting a bear, or killing a wolf.

Some striking information about Lapp music has recently been gathered by Dr. Karl Tiren, who secured phonograph records of the wrath-songs that have exalted profanity into an art. Lapp lays are always forms of personal expression and never means of giving entertainment to listeners. The text of a typical song is melodious and rhythmical, but unrhymed. The music fits the theme; the bear, the reindeer, the squirrel, the river, the hill, even the mosquito, each has its own peculiar motif. Some of the songs are so vivid that during their rendering Lapp women have been known to faint.

Lapland is the home of the purest iron ore in the world. Were it not for Swedish iron. the manufacture of electrical machinery would be greatly retarded. Kirunavara, an enormous mountain of solid, pure iron ore, resembles an immense stone-quarry. It is gradually being cut away from the top. With terrific noise hundreds of rock-drills eat into the ore. Twice a day, for a few seconds only, all work ceases. There is a dead silence while the fuses burn. suddenly the whole earth shakes. After the dynamite has done its work, a cloud of smoke and dust arises, making Kirunavara look like a volcano. A vertical shaft carries the ore downward; trains penetrate a full mile into the heart of the mountain, at its base, to receive the ore falling down the shaft. It is shipped via Narvik. Every half-hour, day and night, the year round, a train of thirty cars leaves Kiruna for Narvik.

That the Lapps show no signs of dying out is due largely to the sensible attitude of the Swedish Government. No attempt is being made to "civilise" them. They are given a simple education sufficient for their needs; they are not compelled to go to Swedish schools; instead a nomad Lapp school accompanies them from place to place. They are permitted to enjoy, unrestrained, their nomad life and care-free existence.

Until I went upon this expedition to Lapland I was seriously beginning to doubt the existence of Santa Claus, but, in spite of jazz, joy-rides and grape-juice, he exists in Lapland. He is not always riding about in a sledge drawn by reindeer and freezing to death. In the summer-time, you will find him sitting on a river-bank in the midst of violets and forget-me-nots, whisking away Arctic mosquitoes while he fishes for salmon-trout.

Santa Claus is a Lapp!

FLEUR-DE-MARIE

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

• ILLUSTRATED BY S. TRESILIAN

⊚

"T will cover itself with blossom—blossom of a magnificence—a purity——"
The stout old marchande-des-quatresaisons waved her hands vaguely, as expressing the limitations of the French vocabulary. Then, as a shrewd wind was blowing across the fortifications and up the Avenue d'Orléans, she slipped them up her loose sleeves again. "And twenty-five sous only. It is incredible," she added more comfortably.

Jeanne-Marie gazed at the shabby little plant with the abstraction of one trying to recall something long forgotten. It was a little stiff plant, with long, narrow, light-green leaves, standing up as straight as lack of water allowed from the little bundle of old newspaper that served it as bed. For any sign of bud or blossom it might have been a young cabbage.

"I—I think the leaves were broader," Jeanne-Marie murmured to herself. "And the branches lay nearer to the ground. But— They are blue, the flowers?" she asked the old woman suddenly. "Blue flowers—small and round—the dark blue of a gentian—with—with—a paler centre?"

"Exactly," agreed the owner of the barrow. "Round flowers of a perfect blue—the blue of the stars. My faith—but yes."

"And it will blossom—when?"

Truth to tell, Madame Veuve Moreau had no more idea than had Jeanne-Marie herself when it would blossom-even if it would blossom at all. It had reached her that morning amid a consignment of chrysanthemum seedlings from the Département of the Deux-Bièvres, by way of her wholesaler in the Halles Centrales, and, although she had no intention of paying for it herself, she set it out for sale with other miscellanies at the cheaper end of the barrow, in the hope that some flower-lover among the crowds of Sunday morning shoppers in the Avenue might buy it as a speculation. But she was at no loss for an answer; her ready tongue was one of her business assets. "Ah-h! Now that is what makes it so

desirable. It blossoms—just about Toussaint—when, save for chrysanthemums, there is so little."

"All Saints' Day!" cried Jeanne-Marie, starting. "Then—how is it called?"

Madame Veuve Moreau did actually hesitate for a moment. "Called?" she answered slowly, to gain time. "Why—it is called——"

"Not—it is not Fleur-de-Marie?" asked Jeanne-Marie, with a note of awe in her voice.

"But indeed——" Madame laughed, with a well-assumed air of chagrin. "But Mademoiselle takes the words out of my mouth. Fleur-de-Marie was what I was going to say. Of course it is Fleur-de-Marie. And only twenty sous."

She imagined some hesitancy in the customer. "And for that price, so small, I will include this beautiful bowl of faience. See how beautiful!" She selected the smallest from her stock of earthenware pots and thrust the root into it. "It is an occasion of the most remarkable."

Jeanne-Marie roused herself from a brown study. "I will take it," she said, and fumbled at the clasp of her lean purse.

Madame Veuve Moreau handed the pot to her with an aggrieved air that was not assumed. It was seldom that she made a mistake. This small, almost shrinking client had about her all the signs of a Parisian business-girl, a midinette or a steno-dactylo. She was well enough in her way, daintily shod and stockinged and smartly hatted, like the rest of her kind, but her chic was essentially of Paris, of the Paris of small means, of the Paris that has an uncanny sense of values and the passion of bargaining. Madame Veuve Moreau had fully expected to abate at least five sous before the deal was completed. Yes-evidently she must be an étrangère. To pay the price demanded, with never a protest, and that in the Avenue d'Orléans on a Sunday morning! It was unheard of! Madame turned angrily upon

her next customer, determined that never again would she allow herself to be so deceived.

Actually she had made no mistake, except indeed in regarding Jeanne-Marie as Parisian For all her neat ankles and smart green hat with its crystal arrow, her furtrimmed coat and her trimly shingled poll, Jeanne-Marie was of Paris only by adoption and that against her will. At heart she was still of the Deux-Bièvres, that self-sufficient Département of the Centre with its fertile meadows reaching down to the shining Loire and its cloud-capped mountains buttressing the central plateau of France, as remote from Paris as is Wensleydale from West Kensington. And because to your true Frenchman his country is not France, but his "Pays" —the little world that can be seen from the top of his own (his very own) church steeple -although in externals Jeanne-Marie had long since become of Paris—why else be born a woman?-in her heart, like one better known before her, she still babbled o' green fields that she might never see again.

Madame Veuve Moreau's pitch was opposite the Café Terminus, which is at the corner of the Avenue opposite the Gate, and as Jeanne-Marie turned away, trying to fit her new prize into her overflowing string-bag, she caught sight of the clock above the comptoir and realised with a little sinking of the heart that it was nearly midday. Arlette would be wondering what had become of her, and it was a good ten-minutes' walk, however fast you hurried, to the little room on the fourth floor in the rue d'Autruisseau at the other end of the Avenue, near the Lion of Belfort.

Had you known Jeanne-Marie for any time at all, this very anxiety would have revealed to you a change in her character which had been increasingly evident for six weeks past. Like those countries which we are told, epigrammatically but untruthfully, are the happiest, Jeanne-Marie had no more history than most of us. father had been a percepteur, or, as we have it, a tax-collector, a thankless job enough, in the arrondissement of Disdon-le-Potier, in the Deux-Bièvres. He died and her mother followed him while Jeanne-Marie was still a young girl studying at the local branch of the Ecole Pigier in the Place Grandissart at Biort. There she learned typing and shorthand and bookkeeping and all the other things that one learns at a big commercial school, and in due course, at the age of twenty-six, she found herself

secretary to the senior partner of the firm of Leval-Dormier, tanners, of the rue de la Glacière in Paris. She had a satisfactory position; she was well paid, comparatively, of course, in a country where a steno-dactylo is fortunate who draws the equivalent of 25s. a week, and she was as dissatisfied as no matter.

Materially, that is to say, she was lucky, compared with thousands of her like. Old M. Dormier was a considerate employer; she had a snug little room an quatrième in the rue d'Autruisseau; Madame Simone, the concierge, was of the most amiable; she was able to afford pretty clothes, which is always something. On the other hand, it is not everything; any more than is a single room, however pleasant, a home or an amiable concierge a husband. And, unfortunately, there was little prospect of exchanging the one for the other.

Jeanne-Marie, who carried a very shrewd head upon her shoulders, was quite aware of that. She was still more or less young, of course, but she was not pretty. Her body was slim and graceful and she had the neatest of hands and feet and her head was wellshaped, especially since she had shingled it, and she had very pretty eyes—yes, so much she admitted, blue and with long dark But her nose was too broad, and so was her mouth, and since she came to live in Paris she had lost her fresh complexion, and, in a word, if you passed her in the street you saw no more than an ordinary girl, bien élevée, no doubt, but not worth another glance.

That was all bad enough, as she told herself whenever she looked in her mirror; still worse was it that she had a sharp tongue and that young men were afraid of her. She often tried to check it, but after all, what would you? The young men with whom you came in contact in the comptabilité of MM. Leval-Dormier invited it, almost demanded it. And quite apart from all else, however well brought up, she had no dot, nor any possibility of one, and young men who hope to rise in the world do not marry penniless girls who have their own living to make. So that, in a word, it was only a matter of counting on your fingers until, from a jeune fille, she should develop into a vieille fille, with nothing to look forward to but an eternity of single rooms au quatrième, more or less pleasant, and of concierges more or less amiable and—pets and parrots and devotions.

So you cannot wonder that as the slow



"'Not—it is not Fleur-de-Marie?' asked Jeanne-Marie, with a note of awe in her voice.
"'But indeed——' Madame laughed, with a well-assumed air of chagrin. 'But Mademoiselle takes the words out of my mouth. Fleur-de-Marie was what I was going to say.'"

years passed her face lost more and more of its soft outlines and her lips began slowly to turn downwards instead of upwards, and her tongue grew always sharper and the blue glitter of her eyes harder under their long lashes. Of course, there was always Antoine. But Antoine can wait—as was indeed his custom.

It happened in the third year of her work in the rue de la Glacière. A famous preacher, Père Février, was drawing all Paris to his course of Sunday evening sermons at Notre Dame. Jeanne-Marie went with the rest, at first out of bored curiosity—and after the first sermon felt that she had found her vocation. Every Sunday evening thereafter she endured the long cold bus ride from the Place Denfert-Rochereau to the Parvis.

Being an orderly person, she selected a favourite chair from the beginning. It was in the shadow of a column, facing a statue which appealed to her as resembling one very familiar to her in her childhood—that of Our Lady of Good Children in the Cathedral of Biort.

Everyone, whatever his religious or political tinge, who comes from the Département of the Deux-Bièvres knows about Our Lady of Good Children, whose ancient shrine still stands on the summit of the Col des Dames between Biort and Disdon-le-Potier. It is -or was in the old days-the most sacred spot in what was then the Duchy of Santogne —but we will come to that in due course. At least the statue in Notre Dame, whether by intention of the sculptor or sheer coincidence, had the same calm, pure, gentle face, and to Jeanne-Marie, glancing up at it in the intervals of Père Février's rousing periods, it brought a message of home and of all that home used to mean to her.

On that particular evening she stayed a little later than usual after the service, less occupied with her devotions indeed than in gazing up at the gentle face of Our Lady and letting her thoughts travel back to the days when she was a little child and life seemed such a gay perspective stretching out before her.

Suddenly, from the other side of the great column beside which she knelt, came the sound of a strangled sob. She listened. It was repeated—and again—and again. Evidently someone was very unhappy—more unhappy than she who had so much to be thankful for. She tried to compose her thoughts—it was, after all, not her affair—but the sobbing continued, always more

pitiful as the penitent made unavailing efforts to check it.

The lights grew dimmer as the Suisses came round with their extinguishers. Jeanne-Marie rose, and as she did so became aware that a woman had also risen on the other side of the pillar. She was, at a hasty glance, very young, wearing a red hat and pale stockings that caught the failing light. She held a handkerchief to her lips and she hurried towards the west door as though afraid to stay. Something urged Jeanne-Marie to follow her. She also, though perhaps with less reason, knew what it felt to be unhappy and alone.

The girl hesitated for a moment as she passed out into the Parvis. Then, as having made up her mind, she crossed it at an angle, making towards the farther bridge, disregarding the welter of trams and taxis that surged about her. She had scarcely reached the pavement when Jeanne-Marie, who was close behind her, saw that she staggered. A moment later she fell to her knees, struggled to rise, and, collapsing utterly, lay still, her body half across the kerbstone.

A crowd began to gather, but Jeanne-Marie, still obeying that unexplained impulse, was the first to reach her. An empty taxi was passing. With the help of an agent, Jeanne-Marie raised the girl to her feet, lifted her into it and drove off before most of the bystanders knew what had happened.

Thus it was that next morning Arlette found herself in Jeanne-Marie's own bed on the fourth floor in the rue d'Autruisseau, and thus it was also that Jeanne-Marie came to believe in miracles.

For, as it then appeared, Arlette was not only unhappy and starving; she was of the "pays." She came, that is to say, from the village of Vic-Saulnoy, which is not ten miles from Disdon-le-Potier, on the other flank of the Col des Dames. Jeanne-Marie could even remember the name of the family— Lafflec-as having figured on her father's tax-registers. Arlette's history was commonplace enough in its ill-fortune. Deceived by one she trusted, driven from her home by a stern father-" Abruti!" Jeanne-Marie called him in her heart—she had wandered to Paris and there quickly reached the depths of misery and despair. She was still little more than a child, seven or eight years younger than Jeanne-Marie, it seemed.

Upon her rescuer the coming of Arlette was—well, it was as though Our Lady of Good Children had answered her unspoken

prayers. For it gave her not alone the happiness of having something altogether helpless and dependent upon her to care for, but a new end upon which to concentrate her interest to the exclusion of her own petty griefs. That this was so was clear after the first visit of Doctor Robineau of the rue Montparnasse, whom Jeanne-Marie called in at once. His verdict was of the gloomiest. He used a great many hard words which neither Jeanne-Marie nor the sympathising Madame Simone understood, "phtisie" and "congestions" and "fluxions" and the like, and he insisted, wisely as it proved, that the malady was as much mental as physical, that the patient was suffering from some great grief or anxiety, but his ultimate decision was that, in a word, it was only a question of time. Jeanne-Marie listened submissively, but in her heart she registered a vow that he was wrong, that he should be wrong, and she, Jeanne-Marie, would prove him so.

He came again and again, but always his verdict was unchanged. The body, he would grant, showed signs of dormant vitality, but—en effet, the mind is more powerful than the body. Remove the grief, the remorse, the anxiety, what you will, that was sapping the mind, and there might be hope for the body. Failing that—

And always Arlette lay back very still on the little narrow bed, gazing up to and beyond the water-blotched ceiling with eyes that seemed to see very little of the world that is around us and very much of that to which, please God, we may all hope to win some day. And always, when her mind cleared, the same words were on her lips, of the mother who had died of grief, died, as the cruel father had said and Arlette believed—though Jeanne-Marie did not, not for a moment-leaving her errant child unforgiven and how there could never be hope for her now, for her who had slain her mother—and how—and how always, to Jeanne-Marie, mothering her, came back more and more of the gracious soul that was really hers, and always, in giving of herself more freely, she drew nearer to the light.

It was some six weeks after the coming of Arlette that Jeanne-Marie bought the Fleur-de-Marie from Madame Veuve Moreau in the Avenue d'Orléans. It was not altogether a coincidence, for she had been talking only the evening before—a monologue indeed, for Arlette's breath was very short and growing always shorter—about Our Lady of

Good Children. And this, by the way, is the legend, which, despite the growth of unbelief, is honoured to this day everywhere in that Département of the Deux-Bièvres which was once the ancient Sovereign Duchy of Santogne.

In those days—for even then there were Dukes in Santogne—the Holy Family were fleeing from Herod and his murderers. In their journeying towards Egypt somehow or other they happened to pass through Santogne. It was then a very savage country overrun by all manner of evil beasts, and especially by the bears of Grandourson. which, as everyone knows, or used to know, were devoted to the service of the Evil One. The reigning Duke was greatly in fear of King Herod, but being natheless a pitiful sovereign, he gave permission that They should rest for the night upon the mountain which is now known as the Col des Dames. Now it happened that ere the dawn came the Holy Child, waking while His Mother still slept, wandered down into the valley below. And when Our Lady awoke it was to find that He had disappeared and that the roaring of fierce beasts filled all the valley. Then she fell upon her knees and prayed that she might be given power-to-succour her Son in His hour of danger. And as she prayed there came a rustling among the herbage that grew upon the mountain-side and a little plant, low-lying upon the soil, with narrow, pointed, light-green leaves, was all astir, and upon its bare stems buds were growing and bursting into little round blue flowers (blue is the colour of Our Lady) with centres of paler blue. And they ranged themselves into a path, which Our Lady followed down the mountain-side until it led to where Her Son was awaiting her. And the day was the day of All Saints.

Then Our Lady, out of her abundant gratitude, prayed for the humble little plant that is now called by her name the gift that it should blossom once every year, upon the day of All Saints, when there are few other flowers to comfort us. And because it had shown the way to where her Child was in peril and in need of succour she prayed also for those who, being children, erred and went astray. She prayed that if, being truly repentant, they sought out the Fleur-de-Marie and set it in their bosom on the day of All Saints, it would blossom there, as a sign that they were shriven and all their sins forgiven. Only, to those froward and obstinate in their wickedness the flowers would never show themselves, and, even

being in blossom, would shrink from such as had not merited forgiveness.

This being so, you will understand that Jeanne-Marie did not hesitate to pay as much as twenty sous for the plant of Fleurde-Marie that she found in the Avenue d'Orléans when she was looking for some was set upon the little table by the bedside
—Jeanne-Marie had contrived a bed for
herself on the floor in the farther corner—
and during her waking hours Arlette turned
her eyes always towards it, watching for the
blossoms that should be a sign to her of her
Mother's forgiveness. But the days passed



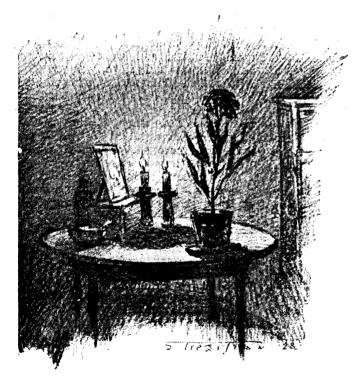
flowers for the room on the fourth floor where Arlette was awaiting her. It was only later that she came to regret her impulse, when Arlette, remembering the legend of her childhood, displayed a passionate faith in its miraculous powers, and set her whole poor heart upon its blossoming, as a certain sign that her sin had been forgiven her. The shabby little plant in its humble pot

and there came no sign of any blossoming. Day after day Jeanne-Marie watered it and cared for it, but no buds showed themselves upon the pale straight leaves that only grew longer and paler and more fragile until it seemed to Jeanne-Marie that it also must die long before All Saints' Day. "It must blossom," Jeanne-Marie told herself day after day. "It shall blossom." For although she was not at all superstitious there

are after all more things in this universe than ledgers and typewriters and blotting-paper.

At last there came a day—ten days before Toussaint—when Doctor Robineau told her that the end was near at hand, that nothing but a miracle could save Arlette. And still there were no buds upon the long thin stems of the Fleur-de-Marie. And all that day, while she was taking down old M. Dormier's notes and setting them out in good commercial French, there was the vision before her of the plant withering in its little red pot and of Arlette's pale eyes devouring it.

The shortest way from the rue de la Glacière to the Lion de Belfort is along the Boulevard Arago. It is pleasant enough on a spring morning when the chestnut trees that line it are in bloom, but on a gloomy winter evening it is a place to hurry through.



It is wide and ill-lit and very lonely, lined on either side by tall grim walls, behind one of which lurks the Sante Prison with, in front of it, the place of public executions. As a rule Jeanne-Marie avoided it after dark, but that evening she gave little thought to the dark shadows and the suggestive echoes of her own footsteps. And suddenly she found herself crying bitterly, less at the thought that Arlette must die than that, dying, she must believe herself still unfor-

given. It was clear that the little plant was not Fleur-de-Marie at all; that the old street-seller had lied to her; that never had there been any chance that it would blossom on the day of All Saints. Yet Arlette believed implicitly that it alone could tell her that her sins—her poor little sins, thought Jeanne-Marie—had been forgiven. Jeanne-Marie sank down upon one of the seats that line the Avenue and gave free vent to her grief. Suddenly she looked up. A tall, shadowy figure stood before her. For a moment she was terrified. Then confidence returned. It was only Antoine.

Now Antoine, as I have told you already, was always in the background, rather a comfortable presence, when Jeanne-Marie condescended to think of him at all. Comfortable, but at the same time mildly ridi-

culous. He was so big, for one thing, not to say clumsy, and the look in his eyes when they met hers, which was seldom, was that of a large, faithful dog that has His hands were offended. large, and so were his feet and his head-everything about him. He was painfully shy, too, and palpably afraid of her, just, as they tell us, an elephant fears a fox-terrier. His very name was absurd-Schultz, a downright Boche name. It was true that he was an Alsatian, from Phalsbourg, who had fought for France and done wonders in the War, they said—but Schultz -Madame Antoine Schultz -figure to yourself-it was too ridiculous!

Of course there was another side to him. He was said to be a great chemist, who had won all kinds of degrees at the University

of Strasbourg, for whom a great future might be expected. He worked in the Leval-Dormier laboratory, and he was understood to be seeking a new way of treating leather which should bring back prosperity to the banks of the little Bièvre river, where there have been tanneries these five hundred years, tanneries that now suffer so severely from foreign competition. Then, he was certainly reliable—it was written in every limb and feature of him. And, although he had never

dared—nor indeed been given opportunity—to hint at it, there could be no doubt he was very much in love. One can always tell.

"Mademoiselle," he cried awkwardly, out of the depths of his embarrassment. "Is there—is there not anything I can do?" Jeanne-Marie turned upon him furiously. "How dare you follow me—speak to me?" she cried.

Even in the shadow you could see that he positively trembled. "I—I—it—that is—the Boulevard is so lonely after dark—and there are vauriens——" He twisted his hands aimlessly. "I saw that Mademoiselle—I was leaving the bureau at the moment—and—and——" He did not add that it was very far from being the first time that he had watched over her safety as she dared the terrors of the gloomy Avenue.

"And you followed me? That is all you have to say?"

"I—I—oh, Mademoiselle. I fear that you are in some—some trouble. If—if

only I might be of some use?"
"It is nothing—nothing at all. You

presume."

And then, very suddenly, in a rush, she found herself telling him all about it, about Our Lady of Good Children and the Fleur-de-Marie that would not blossom and the poor little soul that could not pass in peace. And when she had finished she felt a strange new solace in her heart. Our sorrows are always halved, she realised for the first time, if we have someone to share them with.

He stood before her in the half light, swaying on his feet—just like the big elephant in the Jardin des Plantes, she told herself with an apologetic little smile. "So," he said at last, when she had finished. "So," and was silent for a long minute. Then, "It seems to me," he added meditatively, "if this flower will not blossom it is necessary to procure another that will."

"Of course," she agreed impatiently.

"But how?"

"It grows, you say, on the Col des Dames, which is a mountain in the Deux-Bièvres—some twenty kilometres from the city of Biort. And it blossoms there in the month of November. And it must be found——"

"But they say that it does not grow there any more—that even before the War so many of the roots had been taken—by collectors and others—that it was only to be found on the highest peaks, where it is impossible to reach it. That was what surprised me so—when I saw it—in the

Avenue d'Orléans. No—as Doctor Robineau has said—only a miracle can-save Arlette."

"So. Well, Mademoiselle, were you a chemist you would realise that miracles happen every day, for those who have faith enough to believe in them. And now, Mademoiselle, if—if you would allow me the very great honour to escort you to your door. This Boulevard is so lonely after dark—and there are vauriens—and—see—it is beginning to rain and you are without an umbrella."

He said little more to the purpose, and when he had left her she thought little more about him, for Arlette was worse and Doctor Robineau had to be fetched, and the next day she heard in the office that Antoine had obtained leave to go to Phalshourg, where his mother was seriously ill, and Jeanne-Marie found herself regretting that she had confided in him at all.

The days passed and the patient grew steadily weaker and her despair, in her sentient moments, always deeper. The faithless little plant stood up, stiff and erect beside the bed-head, with never a sign of blossom on its pale green stem. Jeanne-Marie would have removed it, but Arlette's eyes were always turned towards it and more than once she murmured faintly, "Perhaps it may blossom even yet."

At last came the eve of Toussaint. It seemed that the end could be only a matter of hours and Jeanne-Marie, having been excused from her office duties, was sitting beside the bed-head, holding a wasted hand in her own. Two flickering candles, shaded from the patient's eye, shed their pale light upon the Fleur-de-Marie, which also seemed about to give up the struggle for life, for its leaves were limp and wilted. Certainly nothing but a miracle could cause those lifeless stems to blossom.

Jeanne-Marie was very tired, having had little sleep for several nights past. Without knowing it, she must have fallen asleep and even dreamed, for she was vaguely conscious of a beneficent presence in the room and of a sudden lightening of her anxiety. Yet when a sudden cry aroused her she could have sworn that she had been awake all the time.

The cry came from Arlette, who was sitting erect in the bed, which she had not done for a week previously, and staring with rapturous eyes at the flower-pot on the table. "It has blossomed!" she cried ecstatically, in a voice which Jeanne-Marie

recognised even then as being vibrant with new strength. "It has blossomed! Oh, Maman, Maman chérie, tu aimes donc

ta petite fille toujours!"

Of course we know that miracles do not happen nowadays, but on the table there certainly was the little plant of Fleur-de-Marie, no longer wilted and dying, but standing proudly upright, every pale-green leaf as stiff as the proverbial ramrod and bearing a delicate crown of dark blue flowers with paler centres. If that were not a miracle—

And, curiously enough, Doctor Robineau, who was notoriously a sceptic, used exactly the same words when he called later in the evening on what he expected to be his last visit. "It is nothing less than a miracle!" he cried, when he had examined the patient. "There is a decided change for the better. The heart. The respiration. Everything. She will live, Mademoiselle. I really believe that she will live after all."

And, as he left the room, having made his dispositions to deal with the new conditions, Jeanne-Marie heard him mutter to himself, "Did one believe in miracles, now!"

The only annoying thing was that Jeanne-Marie could never obtain a really satisfactory explanation of how the miracle happened. Madame Simone indeed gave her what seemed at first a clue, for, sitting in her loge she had noticed a man ascend the common staircase just about the time it happened. She had noticed it particularly because he carried one arm in a sling and wore a bandage on his head. But that,

after all, proved nothing, in view of Antoine Schultz' obstinate insistence, when he returned to the laboratory some days later, that he had been visiting Phalsbourg to see his mother and that his broken arm was due. not to any injury received while clambering among the upper peaks of the Col des Dames in search of the Fleur-de-Marie, but to having slipped when getting out of a railway carriage! But, as Jeanne-Marie realised very well, it might well be that his shyness and fear of her anger at his taking so much upon himself, prompted his denial. Against which it seemed incredible that a man so large and clumsy could have entered the little room on the fourth floor and exchanged the plants without awakening either Arlette or herself. Though, for that matter, the elephant is a very large beast, who can move very silently when he wishes it.

It was all very puzzling and in the end Jeanne-Marie married him, for no other reason, as she told him, than to make him confess. But even to-day, when he has become head of the great tanning firm of Leval-Dormier S.A. which owes its abundant prosperity to his epoch-making discoveries, and when Arlette, grown plump and comfortable and contented, is the very efficient head of the firm's comptabilité, and when Antoine is no more afraid of his wife than is a husband's duty, when in a word there can be no possible reason for mystifications, Jeanne-Marie's question is still unanswered.

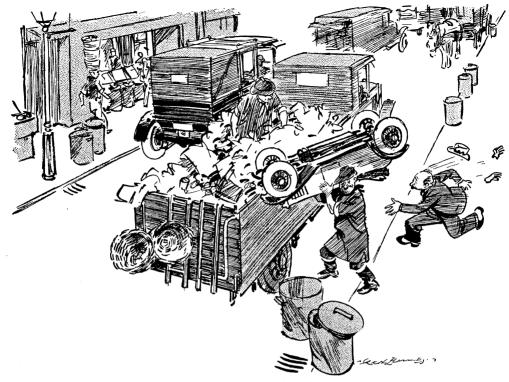
Clearly—if it was not Antoine it was a miracle—and miracles do not happen now-adays, except, of course, in chemistry.

ALL SOULS' DAY.

BECAUSE, my dear, you used to love them so, We pluck the common flowers that still remain, So brave, though Winter whistles down the lane, And bring them here, and wonder, do you know?

Because, my dear, you used to love them so,
We make the little common jests of old
And bring you laughter, though our hearts be cold—
And wonder, do you hear, and do you know?

ANNE PAGE.



A NATURAL MISTAKE.

OWNER OF SMALL DILAPIDATED CAR: Here, what are you doing with my car? DUSTMAN: Lummy, Guy'nor, I thought it 'ad fallen outer the dust-bin!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE LUCK OF THE CLARENCES.

By T. Hodgkinson.

As soon as I broke the mirror I turned instinctively to Mary for sympathy, only to find that none was on issue that day.

"What on earth were you doing?" she demanded, surveying the havoc and remembering the inaccessibility of the glass.

"Only completing my education," I pleaded, trying to hide the golf-club with which I had been practising. "And now I shall go on slicing for seven years."

As this misfortune was not hers, Mary was able to take a robust commonsense view. Ill luck, according to her, would only come if I walked about the room without slippers before the fragments were cleared away.

Having always regarded paddling as essentially an open-air sport, I had no fear of this particular form of evil fortune, but I could not agree with her scorn of the old superstition about the bad luck that follows the breaking of a mirror.

It was, accordingly, without surprise that a week later I found that my only jewel (except Mary, of course) was lost. The Clarences have never gone in largely for gems, but this one diamond, set in an old-fashioned ring, had been in the family ever since the notorious Jasper had won it at cards in the wild days of the Regency, staking against it his wife, and receiving, in the opinion of many who knew the lady, extravagant odds.

Evidently the Luck of the Clarences had become loose in its setting, for suddenly I found that my finger had ceased to scintillate. It was annoying, for mine is one of those professions in which the loss was entirely without advertising value. The frenzied search I instituted at the office completely disorganised the staff, and, to make matters worse, Mary was too engrossed in household matters to comfort me when I reached home.

All she could talk of was the engaging young man who had that day craved permission to

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demonstrate a new vacuum cleaner and had cleansed most of the house between lunch-time and the Children's Hour.

"It can do anything except wash clothes," she assured me.

"An American invention and has to be kept dry," I presumed, but she only went on to chant its praises more loudly.

"You remember how we thought all that glass

you broke was cleared away It even found a bit of that still in the carpet. I saved it to show you."

THE MAN WHO WAS NOT INTERESTED.

By W. E. Richards.

"CARE to look at the paper, sir?" I asked the solitary occupant of my compartment.

"No, thanks," he responded gloomily.

I unfolded my copy again and retired behind its rampart. But I didn't like the tone in which he dismissed my friendly advance. Obviously he was one of those superior persons who despise the Popular Press.

"What is your theory of the cause of the rail-



GRADUATION.

LADY OF THE HOUSE (to diminutive plumber who has just fitted new geyser): How many pennies shall I have to put, young man, to get a nice hot bath?

DIMINUTIVE PLUMBER: Well, lady, speakin fer meself, I can get nicely covered fer tup-

pence, but I expects you'll find it come a bit expensive!

Glass, indeed! Doesn't the woman know the difference between a facet and a fragment? was the Luck of the Clarences thus miraculously restored to me, and in the rapture of the moment 'I sat down and wrote an order for one of the cleaners.

For I felt that I could not agree with Nature in abhorring a vacuum.



GUIDE (at the Tower): This is the room in which the two young princes were smothered. OLD LADY: I don't wonder at it; there's no ventilation at all.

way disaster?" I asked, a few minutes later. 'I have none," he returned from the depths of

his coat collar. I refused to be abashed by his churlish answer.

"Do you think the Government is going to survive long?"

"I don't care," he grunted.

Obviously the man had no interest in news. Perhaps, however, he was a scholar, with interests too deep for the latest sensation. I must not judge him hastily.

I turned to page 2 of my paper and slipped a finger into the next opening in case it should be necessary. The answers were on page 4.



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"No idea," he said.

"Do you know when finger-prints were first used as a means of identification?"

"No," he replied shortly.

"Do you know the greatest and least breadths of the English Channel?"

He only grunted.

"You might perhaps tell me how many of the population of Wales speak Welsh only?"

He glared out of the window.

"Then you should," I insisted. "Our Gardening Expert tells you distinctly to do that this week. He expects it. And have you set your bulbs yet?"

"Humph," he grunted.

"Well, have you backed Ormskirk for the Salisbury Stakes?"

"I have not," he boomed.

"Not a betting man, I expect," I said serenely. "Sorry I asked you that."

"And to what am I indebted," he boomed "for this infernal prying into my private life?"



THE LUCKY SEX.

SHE (to man who has been splashed by passing 'bus): You men are fortunate—you don't have to worry about getting your stockings muddy.

"In which cottage garden is there a mulberry tree planted by Milton?"

He didn't seem interested in that either.

I turned to the "Home Page" in despair.

"Are you aware that skirts are to be worn longer this year?"

"Are they?" he asked dully.
"That is the verdict of Paris."

"Oh!" he said.

"And have you trenched your garden yet and dug in all the dead leaves which are Nature's regenerator?"

"I have not," he snapped.

"Merely curiosity," I explained. "I cannot understand why an intelligent member of the community should take so little interest in the great world in which he lives. Have you no interests, sir, no hobbies, no desire for knowledge, no hope of winning a prize or of rearing a bulb? Do all these great questions featured by our Popular Press leave you unmoved?"

"Absolutely," he growled.

"Then, what manner of man are you," I demanded, "who can afford to let the main stream of life flow by unheeded?"

"I am an editor," he said coldly.

I got out at the next station.



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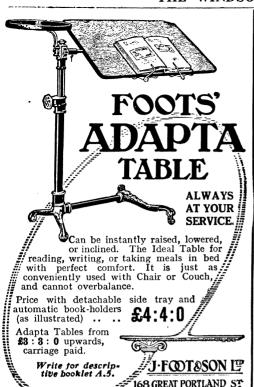
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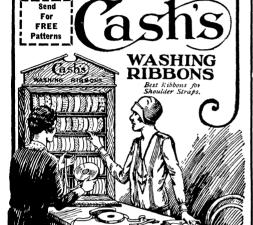
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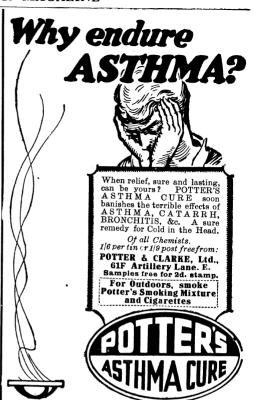
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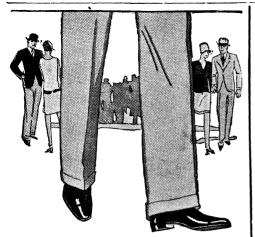
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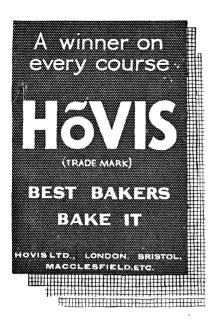
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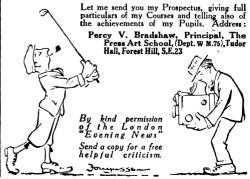
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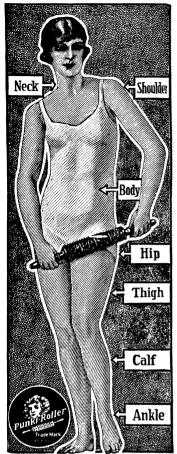
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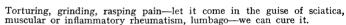
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AT THE GOLF CLUB

(ISSUED BY THE BRITISH TURVEY TREATMENT ASSOCIATION.)

A tall, lean man in the early thirties entered the smokingroom of a well-known Golf Club and, after a glance round,

a man ot about his own age, who was drinking tea at a small wicker table.

After giving his order, he turned to the other and said:

"Very sad about poor Wallace—and to think I was playing golf with him only a week ago. Pneumonia, wasn't it, Doc?"

"In a sense," the doctor replied, putting down his cup.
"How do you mean, 'in a sense'?"
The doctor, who was renowned for his taciturnity, did not

reply.

"You are not trying to insinuate that the poor chap committed suicide, are you?" asked the other.

"In a sense. Yes, in a sense he committed suicide," the

doctor returned gravely.

"But, my dear fellow

"But, my dear fellow . . ."

The doctor held up a thin, bony hand. "Have you ever heard of the Turvey Treatment?" he asked unexpectedly.

"Of course. It is a cure for chronic dipsomaniaes."

"It is not only a cure," the doctor replied quietly, "it is also a preventative."

"But Wallace was not a drunkard. In all the years I have known him I have never seen him more than slightly cheery." cheery

"That is just it," the doctor said enigmatically.
"I do not believe he drank any more than I do, and I call

"I do not believe he drank any more than I do, and I call myself fairly abstemious."

"My dear Sandford," the doctor replied, "it is a hot day, you have just finished your second round, and what are you drinking? Tea, like a sensible man. What would Wallace be drinking if he were here now?"

"Whisky and soda," answered Sandford promptly. "I am going to have one myself presently."

"Exactly," returned the doctor. "You were one of the first people I got to know when I bought my practice five years ago, and I have never known you vary. You drink a small tankard of ale with your lunch, a weak whisky and soda at 6.30, and another with your dinner. When you play bridge or billiards at the club you never touch anything but ginger ale. Now take Wallace. Before his morning round, he used to have a double whisky and milk; out of sheer good-fellowship, he would drink two or three gin and bitters at the bar before lunch, two large whiskys and sodas with his meal, and a liqueur with his coffee. The same programme on a more exuberant scale in the evening, and never less than three drinks between dinner and bed-time. programme on a more exuberant scale in the evening, and never less than three drinks between dinner and bed-time. He was a fine big man. He was never 'tight,' but he was saturated with alcohol, with the inevitable result that he had no stamina with which to resist illness. For the last three years I have been trying to get him to take the Turvey Treatment, but he would not. 'It was only for hopeless drunkards,' to the hed taken it. I should be willing to bet a bundred. ment, but he would not. 'It was only for hopeless drunkards,' etc. If he had taken it, I should be willing to bet a hundred pounds to a broken niblick that we would not be going to his funeral on Thursday."

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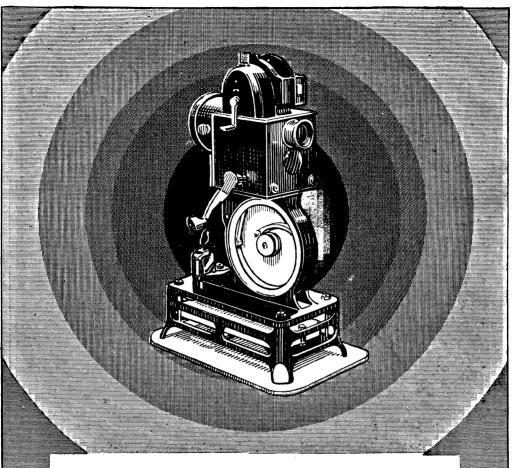


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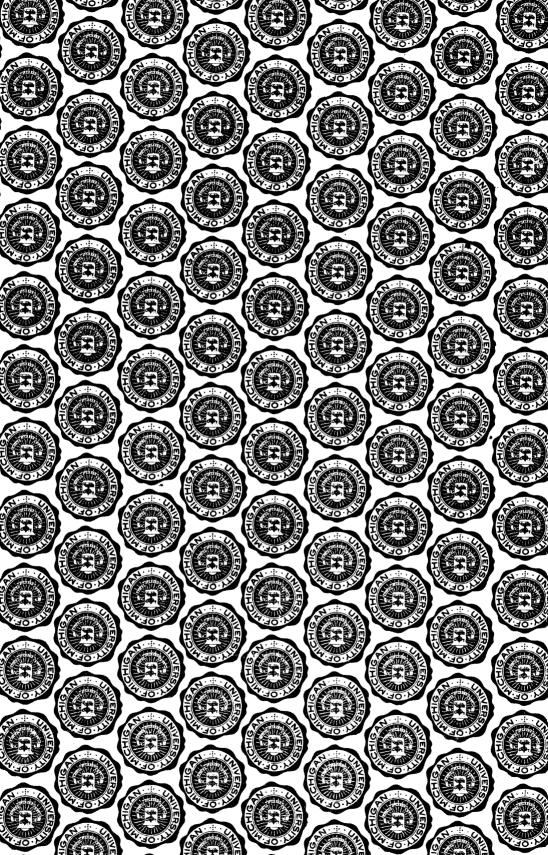


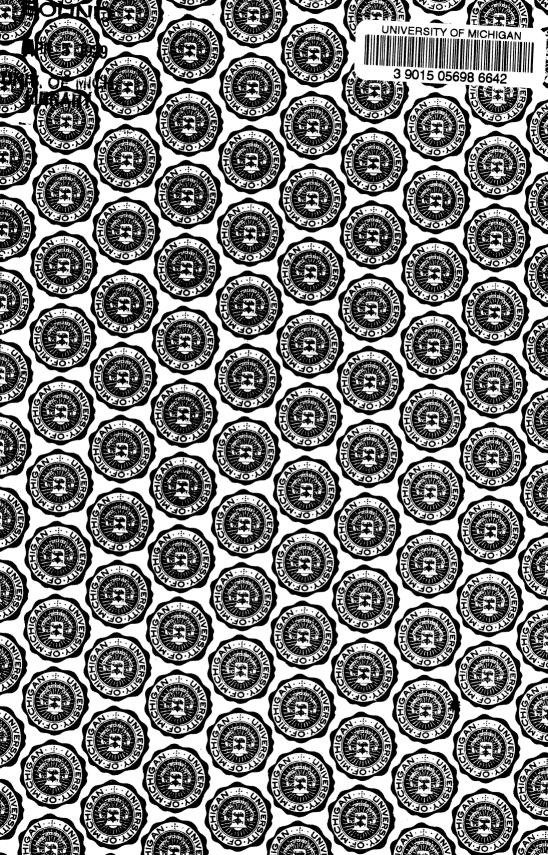


Published by the Proprietors, WARD, LOCK & CO., LTD., Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4, Editorial communications to be addressed "The Editor, Windsor Magazine, Salisbury Square, E.C.4."

Printed in Great Britain by BUTLER & TANNER, LTD., Frome and London.









MAGAZINE

E8 TUNE-NOV 1028

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